

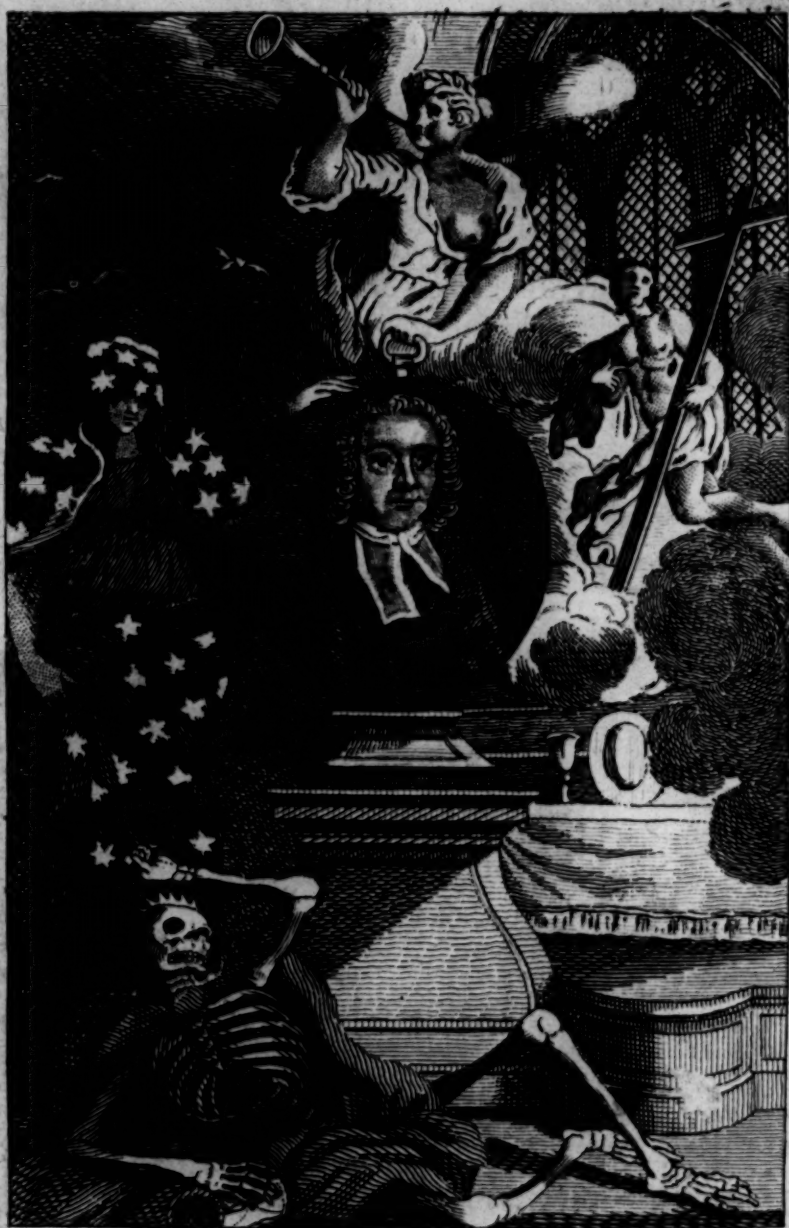
S E R M O N S

B Y

MR. H E R V E Y.

RB23 a. 6607





The Rev.^d MR. JAMES HERVEY, A.M.

THE
Time of Danger,
THE
MEANS of SAFETY,
And the
WAY of HOLINESS:
Being the
Substance of THREE SERMONS
Preached on the late publick FAST DAYS.
To which are added,
A VISITATION SERMON,
Preached at *Northampton*, MAY 10, 1753:
And a
S E R M O N
O N T H E
MINISTRY of RECONCILIATION.

By JAMES HERVEY, A. M.
Late Rector of *Weston Favell*, in *Northamptonshire*.

A N E W E D I T I O N .

L O N D O N :

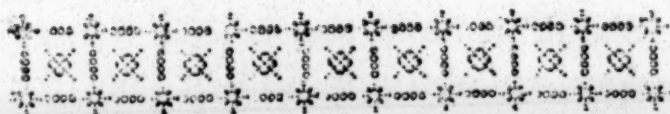
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Bo. 6. 52



P R E F A C E

T O T H E

F A S T - S E R M O N S.

SHOULD any one ask ; “ Why
“ does this author publish his
“ sermons, when the Fast is *gone* and
“ *forgotten?* ” — For this very reason
he publishes, that the fast, though
gone, may not be forgotten. That
we may remember the sins we con-
fessed, and the miseries we deprecated.
Remember the vows of GOD, which
are still around us.

Should it be farther asked; “Why
“ does he obtrude himself on the
“ public, when so many *eminent* wri-
“ ters have already made their ap-
“ pearance? Does he bring with him
“ any distinguished excellency of com-
“ position? Any superior force of
“ argument, or uncommon delicacy
“ of sentiment?”—No such thing.
He pretends to nothing refined or ex-
traordinary. He affects neither bril-
liant thought, nor polished style.
Equally remote from nice criticism,
and profound learning, his discourses
are studiously *plain*, and brought
down to the level of the meanest ca-
pacity.

“What then is his motive?”—This
is the very truth. In several of the
sermons published on this occasion,
the one thing needful seems to be over-
looked. CHRIST and his free grace,
CHRIST

P R E F A C E.

v

CHRIST and his great salvation, are either totally omitted, or but slightly touched.—Where these are but slightly touched, the door of hope and the city of refuge are shewn, as it were through a mist, dimly and indistinctly. We have no other than a transient glimpse of the desirable objects; and only so much light, as is sufficient to bewilder, rather than to direct.—Where they are totally omitted, the door of hope is barred, and the city of refuge withdrawn from our view. In this case, being without CHRIST, we are without consolation; and may justly complain with the mourning prophet, *The COMFORTER, that should relieve our souls, is far off.*

Through the following discourses, a constant regard is paid, to *the redemption which is in CHRIST JESUS*; to his all-atoning blood, and everlasting

ing righteousness. Which are the grand means, both of comforting our hearts, and sanctifying our nature.—Indeed the principal aim of the whole, is, To display the unsearchable riches of CHRIST; the matchless efficacy of his death; and that perfect freedom, with which all his invaluable benefits are bestowed.—*To those who believe, HE is precious*; and to those who are convinced of sin, these salutary truths will be their own best commendation. Such readers will excuse a multitude of blemishes, provided they find JESUS, who was crucified; JESUS, who is the desire of nations; JESUS, than whom no other foundation can be laid, either for present holiness, or future happiness.

As these sermons are not preached to gratify a *curious* taste, neither are they

they published with any fond prospect of reforming a *sinful* nation. Sincerely as the author loves his country, and ardently as he desires the salvation of his countrymen, he is not so vainly sanguine in his expectations.—But this he will venture to assert; That, if ever a reformation is produced, it must, under the influences of the eternal SPIRIT, be produced by the doctrines of free grace, and justification through a REDEEMER's righteousness. Till these doctrines are generally inculcated, the most eloquent harangues from the pulpit, or the most correct dissertations from the press, will be no better than a pointless arrow and a broken bow.

This also he will venture to hope; That the discourses may, here and there, meet with some poor sinner, who is smitten with a sense of guilt,

and alarmed with apprehensions of danger. Who desires nothing so much as to find a resting place; where he may be free from the terrors of conscience, and safe in the day of trouble. This freedom and this safety are to be found *only*, are to be found *infallibly*, in the blessed JESUS, and the blood of sprinkling. If such a reader, by the following pages, is conducted to this divine sanctuary, the writer is satisfied; is rewarded; enjoys the utmost of his wishes.

Then, instead of soliciting the voice of fame, or coveting the wreath of honour; instead of giving himself any concern, about the *officious* critick; he will thankfully adore that Almighty Hand, which *confirmeth the word of his servant, and performeth the counsel of his messengers* *. For oh! how insipid
is

* Isa. xliv. 26.

is the praise of men, compared with the exalted pleasure of glorifying GOD, and edifying an immortal soul! How harmless is defamation from a fellow-creature, when our great CREATOR smiles; and is pleased, by *weak things, and by things that are despised* †, to accomplish the purposes of his infinite grace, and everlasting love!

† 1-Cor. i. 27, 28.



S E R M O N I.

The Time of Danger.

HEB. xi. 28.

Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born, should touch them.

*** I ***
If we consult the history, to which these words refer, we shall find the Israelites in a state of affliction. The Egyptians oppressed them; very heavily laid the yoke up-

on them; and made their “lives bitter with hard bondage.”---The misery of his people GOD pities, and is resolved to redress. Accordingly he sends *Moses*, in the quality of his ambassador, to *Pharaoh* King of *Egypt*, demanding their release. The King most insolently replies; “Who is the LORD, that I should obey his voice, to let *Israel* go? I know not the LORD, neither will I let *Israel* go.” GOD, to chastise his insolence and obstinacy, inflicts a variety of plagues on him and his subjects. In contempt of all which, *Pharaoh* hardens his heart; persists in his disobedience; and refuses to let the people go.—At last, says the LORD, “I will bring one plague more upon *Pharaoh* and upon *Egypt* †;” which shall infallibly accomplish my purpose.
Be

† Exod. xi. 3.

Be their hearts hard as the nether millstone, this shall make them feel. Be their resolution stubborn as an iron sinew, this shall make it bend. "About midnight I will go out into the midst of *Egypt*, and all the first-born in the land of *Egypt* shall die †."

But as the *Israelites* then dwelt in *Egypt*, how should they be safe amidst the general desolation? The LORD directs *Moses* to a method, which should effectually secure the families of *Israel*, while death entered into all the habitations of the *Egyptians*. The method—its execution—and success—are all specified in the text. "By faith *Moses* kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born, should touch

† Exod. xi. 4, 5.

4 THE TIME OF DANGER.

“ touch them.” Where we may observe,

I. A very dreadful danger; intimated by “ the destruction of
“ the first-born.”

II. A method of security from this danger; effected by “ keeping
“ the passover, and the blood
“ of sprinkling.

III. The success of this method, denoted by the destroyer “ not
“ so much as touching them.

The good LORD enable us to open and apply the words, thus divided! Then, we shall see their suitableness to the present occasion; and, I hope, feel their salutary influence on our souls.

I. A very dreadful danger, intimated by “ the destruction of the
“ first-born.” The LORD had already put his hand to the sword. It

was.

was even now drawn from the scabbard, and had received a commission to go forth. To go forth, that very night; to walk through all the land of *Egypt*; and to be bathed, before the morning-light, in the blood of the first-born. *All* the first-born, from the haughty king that sat on the throne, even to the slave that toiled at the mill, and the very sheep that yeaned in the field. Tremendous, as well as inevitable blow! O, what an alarm will it create, and what affliction will it spread! Make every heart sad, and every house a scene of mourning. “ There shall be a great cry
 “ throughout all the land of *Egypt*,
 “ such as there was none like it, nor
 “ shall be like it any more †.

And is not the present time, a time of imminent danger? Are not the judgments

† Exod, xi, 6.

judgments of the Almighty, *now* abroad in the world? Have not earthquakes shaken kingdoms, and rent the foundations of nature? Have they not spread terroure through our own and distant nations; laid wealthy towns and magnificent cities in ruin; and swallowed up to destroy unknown multitudes of our fellow-creatures?

Is not the sword of slaughter drawn? Has not war hung out her bloody flag? Are not the flames kindled in *Europe* and *America*; on the land and on the ocean? Are they not gathering strength daily; spreading their rage continually; and threatening to overrun all?

If we were evidently superior to our enemies, in number and power, in vigilance and unanimity, yet the events of battle are uncertain. "The
" battle

“ battle is not always to the strong §.”
 Success and victory depend upon a
 hand, higher than the arm of flesh.
 “ Without me, saith the LORD,
 “ they shall bow down under the
 “ prisoners, and they shall fall under
 “ the slain †.”

But are we not at war with one of
 the most potent, insidious, enterprising
 kingdoms in the world? Is there not
 great reason to suppose, that they
 will soon be joined by their neigh-
 bours the *Spaniards*? And if we have
 been worsted by one, how shall we
 contend with their united force?—
 Considering the situation and behavi-
 our of the ungrateful *Austrians*, have
 we not cause to suspect the junction
 of a third *Popish* power, against our
 religion and liberty? Will not the
 court of *Rome*, with all her bigotted
 adherents,

§ Eccles. ix, 11.

† Is. i, 4.

adherents, urge and instigate them to be active in this confederacy †? Will they not, at this juncture—the most favourable for the prosecution of their purpose, that any age has afforded, or their own sanguine zeal can desire—will they not exert their utmost ability, to crush the protestant cause, and extirpate the protestant name †?

Should

‡ I am informed, that when the Pope heard of the Alliance, lately established between the houses of *Bourbon* and *Austria*, strengthened by the unexpected accession of *Russia*, he cried out with an air of triumph, *O admirabile commercium generis humani! admirable association of mankind!* promising himself, I suppose, from this remarkable turn of affairs, such advantages to the cause and interests of popery, as exceeded even all his hopes.

† The *French* and *Austrian* ministers, it seems, have long been concerting measures, to tear up the reformed religion by the roots, and not to leave a protestant upon the face of the earth. This execrable plot is discovered, by the sagacity and activity of the king of *Prussia*; is averted, and proved in his memorials lately published. If that hero and his army should fall before their enemies, what can hinder the execution of this horrid design? It may puzzle the acute politician, to assign any *human* means, sufficient to stand as a barrier,

Should the enemy make a descent upon our island, what can we expect, but that our island be turned into a field of blood? They, who have always been jealous of our power and influence, have now added rage to their jealousy. Their resentment, like the burning fiery furnace, is heated seven times hotter than usual. We should certainly find them, as the scripture speaks, “a bitter and hasty nation †.” And without the spirit of prophecy may venture to declare; woe be to *England*, if GOD should now deliver it into the hands of the *French*.

Some perhaps, may cry; “These
“ fears are all chimerical. There is
“ no ground for such discouraging
“ suggestions. We don’t question,
“ but we shall be a match, and more
“ than

† Heb, i. 6.

“than a match for our adversaries.”
 —To this confident boasting, let not my tongue, but let the course of events, let the disposals of providence reply.—Have we, then, been superior in the day of trial? Alas! Have we not lost *Minorca*? Is not *Oswego* gone? A general slain, and his army cut in pieces. An admiral condemned to be shot to death, and his fleet defeated by an inferior number of the enemies ships? Are not ravages and depredations made almost continually upon our colonies in *America*; and horrible unheard-of cruelties committed by the savages, on the persons of our fellow-subjects? What have we reaped from the late campaign, but disappointment, loss, and shame?

Are not all these things apparently against us? Will they not make our
 allies.

allies backward to come in with their succours; and render the powers that are unengaged, afraid to declare themselves on our side?

All these circumstances considered, the present time appears to be a time of uncommon danger: affairs, look where-ever we will, wear a lowering aspect. "Our sky is black with clouds, " and there is the sound of abundance " of rain *." Judgments seem, more than seem, to be hovering all around us. How soon they may fall, GOD only knows!

If GOD indeed were for us, we might trust and not be afraid. We might look danger in the face, and boldly say; "Who shall be against us†?" —But is this the case? Are we "a " righteous nation, that keepeth the " truth?"

* 1 Kings xviii, 41, † Rom, viii. 31,

“truth †?” Is there sufficient reason to believe, that the holy ONE of *Israel* is our defence?—Are we not, on the contrary, a sinful generation; a people laden with iniquity? Is there not abundant reason to fear, lest our GOD should say, in terrible indignation; “they are joined to idols, let them alone *?” In order to determine this point, let us examine our ways. Nothing can be more proper for a day of humiliation. Are not *we*, like the *Egyptians*, in a state of great danger, if we consider,

1. The *sins* of our nation.
2. The *judgments* of GOD denounced upon such sins.
3. The *certain execution* of those judgments, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.

I. Consider the sins of our nation.

Here

† Is. xxvi, 2,

* Hos. iv, 17,

Here I shall mention some, and only some of those abominations ; which, where-ever they are found, cannot fail to provoke the eyes of GOD's glory ; and render, either a person or a people, ripe for his vengeance.

The *Christian sabbath* is an inestimable privilege to the church of CHRIST. It is a pledge of GOD's distinguishing love. It is a happy means of building us up in knowledge ; of establishing us in faith ; and preparing us for our everlasting rest.—Yet is it not shamefully profaned, in city and in country ? What multitudes waste it in idleness, or squander it away in unedifying conversation ? Making it by far the most useless and contemptible day of the week.—This they do, even though GOD strictly charges, saying, “ Remember ye the sabbath-day,” not barely to abstain from your ordinary works,

works, but “to keep it holy *;” devoting it entirely to holy purposes, and religious-exercises.—This they do, even though GOD solemnly threatens, saying; “If ye will not hearken unto me, to hallow the sabbath-day; then will I kindle a fire in your gates, and it shall devour the palaces of *Jerusalem*, and it shall not be quenched ||.”

Is not the *name of GOD*, great, wonderful, and holy? Ought it not to be used with the deepest veneration, and magnified above all things? But is it not audaciously dishonoured, and impiously blasphemed? Dishonoured by customary and wanton, blasphemed by false and perfidious swearing? Has not the most high GOD declared, that he will in no wise hold such daring wretches guiltless? Yet, how do these

* Exod. xx. 8.

|| Jer. xvii. 27.

these daring wretches swarm, like the locusts of society, in our polluted land? *O England*, how is thy air tainted with this breath of the infernal pit! How do thy streets resound, most horribly resound, with this language of hell! And will not the Almighty LORD make thee know—know, by bitter experience, what that meaneth, which is spoken by his prophet? “Because of swearing, the
“land mourneth *” Mourneth under afflicting visitations, and desolating judgments.

Is not the *scripture* a singular blessing? yes; it is celebrated by the psalmist, as the sovereign blessing; that which crowns the other instances of divine goodness; “he shewed his
“word unto *Jacob*, his statutes and
“ordinances unto *Israel*.” It is also

B celebrated

† Jer. x xiii. 10.

celebrated as a most distinguishing blessing, from which multitudes are excluded; "He hath not dealt so
 " with all nations, neither have the
 " heathen knowledge of his laws †." Should not then the scripture be precious to our souls; more precious than fine gold; sweeter also than honey, and the droppings of the honeycomb? Should we not exercise ourselves in it, day and night*; reading it by day, meditating on it by night? Should we not make it the most delightful subject of our conversation? Talk of it to our children, our domestics, our neighbours; when we lie down and rise up; when we walk by the way and sit in the house †?—But where are the persons, who bear such a superlative esteem for the bible?

Where

† Psal. cxlvii. 19. 20.

* Psal. i. 2.

† Deut. vi. 7.

Where is the company that delights to converse on those oracles of truth? Where are the parents, that diligently instruct their children, and feed them with the milk of the word? Diversions, of every kind, engages their attention, and the most trifling impertinence employs their tongue; but the LORD's word is insipid, if not irksome. His word is treated even by protestants, as the manna was treated by the *Israelites*. Who had the ingratitude and impudence to say; "our soul loatheth this "light bread *." A plague from the LORD of hosts was the consequence of their contemptuous treatment of the meat that perisheth. Of how much sorer punishment shall we be thought worthy, who condemn the food which endureth to everlasting life!

B 2

GOD

* Numb. xxi. 5.

GOD hath reserved the unjust, saith the scripture, unto the day of judgment, to be punished; “chiefly
“those who walk after the flesh, in
“the lusts of uncleanness †.” Is not this iniquity rampant among the inhabitants of *England*? What lewd pictures are exposed to view! What filthy writings are suffered to see the light! Fewel for lust, and incentives to debauchery.—What is wit, in our days, but either some lascivious hint, or some licentious abuse of scripture! Are not the wanton entertainments of the stage, and other seminaries of lewdness, countenanced, supported, thronged? Can you acquit our cities and towns of drunkenness, revellings, and abominable excesses? Are not these, and all sorts of filthiness, found in our skirts? If so, hear the word of
the

† 2 Pet. ii. 10.

the LORD ; and let it sink deep into every heart. “ When I had fed them “ to the full, they then committed adultery, and assembled themselves “ by troops in the harlots houses. “ They were as fed horses in the “ morning : every one neighed after “ his neighbour’s wife. Shall I not “ visit for these things ? saith the “ Lord. And shall not my soul be “ avenged on such a nation as this † ? ”

Is not religion, *vital religion*, very much upon the decline, even among the serious ? Do not many professors, quite destitute of the power of godliness, content themselves with the mere form ? Whereas, if any, in imitation of the first believers and the first preachers, are alive to GOD, and zealous for the LORD of hosts ; these persons, instead of being encouraged,

B 3

are

† Jer. v. 7, 8. 9.

are opposed ; instead of being esteemed, are reproached—Of such persons even the malignant spirits could bear witness ; “ These men are the servants
 “ of the most high GOD, who shew
 “ unto us the way of salvation ||.”
 But among us, who call ourselves Christians ; who pique ourselves upon being the purest church in *Christendom* : among us, such persons are deemed the visionaries of the age, the disturbers of society, the men that would “ turn the world upside down †.”
 The ministers who are most faithful, and the people who are most exemplary, are a derision and a bye-word among their neighbours. Thus, in *Israel*, “ they mocked the messengers
 “ of GOD, and despised his words,
 “ and misused his prophets.” But it was to the confusion of those scoffers,
 and

|| Acts xvi. 17.

† Acts xvii. 6.

and the ruin of their country. “ For
 “ the wrath of the LORD arose a-
 “ gainst his people, till there was no
 “ remedy. Therefore he brought
 “ upon them the king of the *Chal-*
 “ *dees*, who flew their young men
 “ with the sword, in the house of
 “ their sanctuary : and had no com-
 “ passion upon young man or maiden,
 “ old man, or him that stooped for
 “ age †.”

Are we not abandoned to a spirit
 of *carnal confidence*? When do we dis-
 cover any reliance on the Almighty,
 or ascribe any of our success to his
 gracious interposition! It is not GOD,
 but our sword, that shall help us. Or,
 if any unseen power is acknowledged,
 it is not the LORD of hosts, but good
 fortune. One would almost imagine,
 that we were ashamed of a heavenly

B 4

ally ;

† 2 Chron. XXXvi, 16, 17.

ally; and thought it a disgrace to own ourselves dependent on Omnipotence. Is not such a temper a national infatuation, and the harbinger of national judgments? *Zedekiah* and the men of *Judah*, forgot or neglected the rock of their salvation, and made *Pharaoh's* army their confidence. * But see, what was the issue; to hear it from the mouth of HIM, who fulfilleth the word of his servants. “ Though he
 “ had smitten the whole army of the
 “ *Chaldeans* that fight against you,
 “ and there remained but wounded
 “ men among them, yet should they
 “ rise up every man in his tent and
 “ burn this city with fire †.”

Should you say, this is a false charge. Have we not, this very day, publicly acknowledged, That, “ with-
 “ out the divine aid, the wisest coun-
 “ fels

* Jer. xxxvii. 10.

“fels of frail men, and the multitude
 “of an host, and all the instruments
 “of war, are but weak and vain?”
 Have we not likewise expressly declared,
 That, “not confiding in the
 “splendour of any thing that is great,
 “or the stability of any thing that is
 “strong here below, we do most hum-
 “bly flee to the LORD for succour,
 “and put our trust under the shadow
 “of his wings†?” I would to GOD,
 we believed *that* acknowledgment,
 and acted conformable to *this* declara-
 tion. We should then be very dili-
 gent to propagate religion, among our
 soldiers and sailors. We should seek
 for such officers and commanders, as
 are men fearing GOD. We should
 be as desirous to establish our troops
 in godliness, as to train them up in
 military discipline. But is it thus
 B 5 with

† The *Form of Prayer* appointed for the fast.

with our army; Is it thus with our navy? Visit a man of war. You will think yourself, not in one of the bulwarks of our island, but in a little hell. Observe the gentlemen of the sword. Concerning the generality of them, you will have reason to ask; Are these Christians? Are they not incarnate devils §.—And can we expect, that the infinitely pure GOD will go forth with *such* hosts? Will he not rather become “their enemy, “and fight against them †.”

What *ignorance* prevails, especially
among

§ Does this sound harsh? or will any other part of the charge, advanced in these discourses, prove offensive—I am sorry, there should be any occasion for such language. But I dare not retract it; I must not soften it; no, nor apologize for it. Thus much, however, I will say, borrowing the words of *Job*. *If it be not so now, let experience make me a liar, and in this case make my speech nothing worth.* Job xiv. 25. Desirous as I am of speaking truth, here I shall rejoice to be convicted of falsehood.

† 1s. 1xii. 10.

among the lower ranks of people? The grossest ignorance of themselves and of GOD our SAVIOUR; the grossest ignorance of grace, and salvation, by a REDEEMER's righteousness; the grossest ignorance of the very first principles of her holy religion. To do evil, they are wise. But to do good; to believe in JESUS CHRIST; to love and glorify HIM, who bought sinners with his blood; to do all, to do any of this, they have no knowledge. And it is a small matter to be thus *children of darkness*? Is not the soul alienated from the life of GOD through ignorance †? Does not this displease the most high GOD, and provoke the holy One of *Israel*? Let his own word determine. “It
 “ is a people of no understanding,
 “ therefore he that made them, will

B 6 “ not

† Eph. iv. 18.

“ not have mercy on them ; and he
 “ that formed them, will shew them
 “ no favour †.” Are these impotent
 menaces ? made only to be contem-
 ned ? Then we may dismiss our fears.
 But if they are the word of GOD,
 which liveth and abideth for ever ;
 then we have reason to cry, “ What
 “ will become of *England* ?”

In a word ; religion, both as to
 knowledge and practice, was never at
 so low an ebb, since the reformation
 took place. Nor luxury, and immo-
 rality of every kind, at such an enor-
 mous height.—Where now are our
rulers ? Are they zealous for GOD,
 and valiant for the truth ? Have they
 courage to stem the torrent ; or to
 oppose the overflowings of ungodli-
 ness ?—Where are the *grandees* and
magistrates ? Warm with generous
 indignation,

† Isa. Is. xxvii. 11.

indignation, do they snatch the spear; and like the gallant *Phineas*, smite through the loins of iniquity?—Alas! Have not our great men “altogether broken the yoke, and burst the bonds ||?” Are they not, generally speaking, the ringleaders in transgression; as eminent for their contempt of GOD, as for the affluence of their circumstances? “Yea, the hand of the princes and rulers hath been chief in *the several* trespasses †.” But will that dignity, which they have abused; will that authority, which was lent them for better purposes; will those distinctions be a security to them or their country, in the day of visitation?—hear what the righteous LORD says, who is higher than the highest, and able to execute all his decrees: “It is the sword of the great
“men

|| Jer. v. 5.

† Ezra ix. 2.

“ men that are slain, which entered
 “ into their privy chambers. I have
 “ set the point of the sword against
 “ all their gates, that their hearts
 “ may faint, and their ruins be mul-
 “ tiplied †.” Gates, be they ever so
 strongly fortified, or ever so carefully
 guarded, are no fence against the
 point of JEHOVAH’s sword. And
 if sin is suffered to enter, judgments
 will assuredly follow. Judgments will
 follow even the most powerful and
 wealthy sinners; will pursue them,
 like an eager blood-hound; will hunt
 them, like a dismal ghost; will force
 a way into their palaces, nay, into
 their closest retirements; and never
 remit the chase till *fainting of heart*
 ends in *multiplied ruin*; in the ruin
 of themselves, their families, their
 country.

Amidst

† Ezek. xxi. 14, 15.

Amidst all these crying evils, are we not *presumptuously secure*? is there not a deplorable spirit of stupidity, which blinds our eyes, and renders our hearts insensible? scarce any one lays these miseries and dangers to heart. Who mourneth for the abominations of the land? who stirreth up himself to call upon GOD? if so be, he may yet be entreated, and have mercy upon *Zion*.—Are we not too much like the intoxicated finners of the old world? “they eat, they drink; they bought, they sold; they planted, they builded.” They gave themselves wholly up to sensual gratifications and inferior cares; disregarding all the admonitions of *Noah*, and all the tokens of impending vengeance. *Till the divine long-suffering ceased; the universal flood came; and, with irresistible violence, “swept them all a-*
“way.”

“way †.”—Are we not in the condition of those supine senseless people, spoken of by the prophet *Zephaniah*? “it shall come to pass at that day, that I will search *Jerusalem* with candles, and punish the men that are settled upon their lees; that say in their heart, the LORD will not do good, neither will he do evil.” And may we not justly expect their awful doom? “Therefore their goods shall become a booty, and their houses a desolation. Their blood shall be poured out as dust, and their flesh as the dung. Neither their silver nor gold shall be able to deliver them in the day of the LORD’s wrath, but the whole land shall be devoured by the fire of his jealousy *.”

As a farther aggravation of our crimes,

† Luke xvii 27.

* Zeph. i. 12, &c.

Tremendous

crimes, have we not been *incorrigible*, amidst the most compulsive and the most winning motives to amendment? ---we have been visited with a *contagious distemper* among our cattle; which, we were apprehensive, might have introduced a plague among the human race. From this fear we have been delivered. But are we delivered from our evil works, and have we renounced all ungodliness.---*Rebellion* broke out in our island, and threatened to overthrow our protestant government, and deprive us of our reformed religion; threatened to deprive

Tremendous threat'ning! *Black as night it stands*
Fierce as ten furies, terrible as hell,
And shakes a dreadful dart;

MILTON.

Even the dart of divine indignation over a guilty land. Yet who is awakened from a state of indolence? who is induced to watch and pray? who falls down at the feet of JEHOVAH, though they see his wrath enkindling, and hear his terrors denounced?

prive us of our liberty and its privileges, of our peace and its comforts. This storm also was soon blown over, and tranquillity restored to our land. But did we return every one to the LORD our GOD, who dealt so graciously with us?---*Earthquakes* have shattered other kingdoms; have destroyed other cities; while they only admonished, not injured, us and ours. Has this goodness, this distinguishing goodness of GOD, led us to repentance?---were we not lately preserved from the most calamitous of all temporal losses? from losing the *precious fruits* of the earth? when the corn was ripe, and ready for the sickle, who can forget the lowering sky and the descending rains? which held back the husbandman's hand, and forbad the gathering. A few more days of such unseasonable weather had inevitably spoiled

spoiled the produce of the ground, and destroyed the staff of life. But Divine Providence, at the very hour of need, restrained the immoderate showers; bid the sun shine forth with peculiar brightness; and gave us the expected weeks of the harvest. Thus rescuing us from famine; perhaps, from pestilence; probably, from mutiny; certainly, from a train of evils, the particulars of which we cannot so much as imagine. But is there not too much ground for the complaint, so pathetically urged, and so frequently repeated by the prophet; "Though
 "I have done all this for you, yet
 "have ye not returned unto me,
 "saith the LORD*."

Behold, now, the state of our nation.—Our sins abound, and are
 grown

* Amos iv, 6. 8. 9. 10. 11.

grown up to heaven—sins of every, even the most horrid kind—sins among all ranks, from the highest to the lowest—in our sins we persist; though wooed, as it were, with the choicest mercies: though made to smart under various judgments; tho' threatened with far more afflictive visitations.—And will the great, the mighty, the terrible GOD always bear with such a people? will he receive the most horrible indignities, and still, still refrain himself? surely, he will say, with determined indignation! “Ah, I will ease me of mine
 “adversaries, and avenge me of mine
 “enemies †.”—Has he not evidently begun to show us terrible things in righteousness? and what, O! what may the end of these things be! how
 doleful,

† Is. i. 24.

doleful, how destructive! unless sovereign grace interpose, bringing us, by faith in the SON of GOD, to unfeigned repentance, and newness of life.—Some notion we may form, concerning the end of these things, by unfolding the second point,

The *judgments* of GOD denounced on such sins.—Where such iniquities prevail, we might naturally conclude, that the divine indignation is awakened, and the divine vengeance lingereth not. Is there a GOD? does he behold the children of men? is his nature infinitely pure and holy? surely then he cannot, he will not suffer the most outrageous violations of his sublime perfections, to pass unpunished.—Thus we might argue from the nature of GOD: this we might conjecture from the aspect of things. But we have a more sure word of prophecy.

cy. In this word, "the wrath of
 "GOD is revealed against all ungod-
 "liness and unrighteousness of men †." And see! in what flaming colours, by what frightful images, this wrath is represented, these judgments are described.

They are likened to a *lion*, rending his prey. The LORD had been "*unto Ephraim as a moth*, and to the "*house of Judah as a worm*." He had inflicted milder judgments; rebuking them gradually, and withholding inferior comforts. His judgments were like a moth fretting the garment, or like a worm corroding the wood. In both which cases, the consumption creeps, as it were; the wasting proceeds silently and slowly. Thus the chastising JEHOVAH acted; giving

† Rom. i, 18.

giving the people space for recollection, and looking for repentance. But no repentance was produced. They continued irreclaimable, adding sin to sin. Then says the LORD, "I will be unto *Ephraim as a lion*;" which, all fierce and ravenous, rushes upon a lonely traveller. I will now come forth, as an incensed and irresistible adversary, and be "as a roaring lion to the house of *Judah*." *I, even I*, who am omnipotent, *will tear*, will destroy them with a mighty hand; *and go away*, satiated with slaughter and vengeance. *I will take away* both prince and people; I will take away their very place and nation; *and none shall* have power to effect, or courage to attempt, a *rescue* †. If GOD do thus to perverse
and

† Hof. v. 12. 34.

and incorrigible *Judah*, why should we imagine, that he will deal otherwise with perverse and incorrigible *England*?

They are described by a *flood*.
 “ Now therefore, behold, the LORD
 “ bringeth up upon them the water
 “ of the river, strong and many, even the king of *Affyria*, and all his
 “ glory: and he shall come up over
 “ all his channels and go over all his
 “ banks. And he shall pass through
 “ *Judah*; he shall overflow and go
 “ over; he shall reach even to the
 “ neck, and the stretching out of his
 “ wings shall fill the breadth of thy
 “ land, O *IMMANUEL* *.” The king
 of *Affyria* and his army, determined
 to invade *Judah*, are signified by “ the
 “ waters of the river.” These “ the
 “ LORD

* *Is.* viii 7, 8.

“ LORD bringeth up,” over-ruling the purposes of ambitious princes, and making even their wicked designs subservient to his holy will.—

They are, like the waters of an immense flood, *strong and many*; their multitude innumerable, and their force unconquerable. For they shall come with *all their* glory; with their choicest troops, their ablest commanders, and their whole warlike artillery.

“ He shall come up over all his channels and go over all his banks;” from all parts of his vast dominion, his troops shall be assembled; each province shall be drained of its bravest inhabitants; and all unite to render this expedition one of the most formidable, that ever was undertaken.—

“ He shall pass through *Judah* ;” not only make inroads upon the frontiers, but push his way through the country,

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try,

try, and penetrate the very heart of the kingdom. "He shall overflow;" spread terror and desolation on every side, and in every quarter. "He shall go over" villages, towns, cities, tribes; and bear down all before him. He "shall reach even to the neck;" his ravages shall extend even to the royal city, to the very gates of the metropolis; threatening destruction to the palace of the king, and the walls of the temple. "The stretching out of his wings," the several detachments and parties of his victorious army, "shall fill the breadth" of the land with havock, slaughter, and ruin. Even "of thy land, O *IMMANUEL*." Their relation to thee, shall procure no favour, shall afford no protection. They have dishonoured that goodly name, wherewith they were called. Therefore that goodly
name

name shall no longer stand in the breach, but pour itself with the torrent, and render it irresistible.—Such an inundation of judgments so terrible, so destructive, have not we deserved, may not we expect?

THESE judgments are compared to fire; and to the fiercest of fires, that which glows in a furnace. “ The
 “ house of *Israel* is to me become
 “ dross, all they are brass, and tin,
 “ and iron, and lead, in the midst of
 “ the furnace; they are even the
 “ dross of silver. Therefore thus
 “ saith the LORD GOD, because ye
 “ are all become dross, behold there-
 “ fore I will gather you into the midst
 “ of *Jerusalem*. As they gather brass,
 “ and iron, and tin, and lead, into
 “ the midst of the furnace, to blow
 “ the fire upon it, to melt it; so will
 “ I gather you, in mine anger and in
 C 2 “ my

“ my fury ; and I will leave you there,
 “ and melt you. Yea, will gather
 “ you and blow upon you in the fire
 “ of my wrath, and ye shall be melt-
 “ ed in the midst thereof *.” Aston-
 nishing words ! and they are doubled !
 they are redoubled ! in order to alarm
 the insensible finners. As the sword,
 by being brandished in many a dread-
 ful circle, over the criminal’s head,
 strikes terror into his apprehensions,
 before it does the work of vengeance
 on his heart.—This generation is
 become *brass*, impudent in their wic-
 kedness. They have a whore’s fore-
 head : they cannot blush at their ini-
 quities, but glory in their shame.—
 They are *tin* ; a degenerate race ;
 children that are corrupters. They
 have forsaken the good old way, and
 swerved from the example of their
 fathers.

* Ezek. x xii. 18. 19. 20. 21.

fathers.—With regard to hardness of heart, they are as *iron*. Impenitent amidst all their guilt ; obstinately tenacious of their vices ; and not to be wrought upon by any addresses, not to be reclaimed by any expedients.—In another respect, they are as *lead* ; stupid and sottish ; pliable to evil, but for any good purpose unmeet ; to every good work reprobate.——Because they are so exceedingly sinful, they shall be overtaken by GOD's anger, and surrounded by his fury ; as metals, cast into *the midst of a furnace*, are surrounded with the raging heat. The flame of this wrath shall be *blown*, as with a vehement wind, to its utmost height. In this furnace they shall *be left*, to this wrath they shall be abandoned ; till, by a complication of afflictions, resembling the

complication of their vices, they are overcome, subdued and even *melted*. So melted, as to be either purged from the dross of their iniquities, or else blended together in one promiscuous ruin.

These judgments are described by the terrible representation of an *end*. An end of affluence and prosperity, of which we have gloried. An end of power and strength, in which we have trusted. An end of all national blessings, which we have not improved to GOD's honour, but turned into licentiousness. " Thus saith the
 " LORD GOD; an end is come up-
 " on the four corners of the land.
 " The sword without, and the pesti-
 " lence and the famine within: he
 " that is in the field shall die with the
 " sword, and he that is in the city,
 " pestilence and famine shall devour
 " him."

“him †.” For this we have been ripening, by an unintermitted course of ungodliness and iniquity. And what can be expected by an impenitent people, hating to be reformed? what? but that judgments which have long been suspended, should at last be inflicted? “An end is come.—” “It is come upon the land.” It is a national visitation. Not confined to a part, but extending to the whole kingdom.—“Upon the four corners” of the land. No place shall be exempt; nothing secure. Neither that which seems to be most secret, nor that which lies most remote. The vengeance is universal and inevitable.—The executioners of this vengeance take their stand, within and without, at home and abroad; so that to fly from one, is only to fall into the

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hands

† Ezek. vii. 2. 15.

hands of another. "He that is in
 "the field," shall find no way to e-
 scape, "but shall die with the sword.
 "He that is in the city," shall obtain
 no protection, but "famine and pe-
 "stilence shall devour him." Every
 city shall be a slaughter-house, and e-
 very field a field of blood. In city
 and country, sin has prodigiously a-
 bounded; therefore in city and coun-
 try, desolation shall be made; deaths
 shall be multiplied; miseries shall a-
 bound.

These are some of the images, by
 which the judgments and the wrath
 of GOD, are represented in the scrip-
 tures. But when all images are used,
 when fancy itself is exhausted, we
 may truly cry out with the psalmist;
 "who knoweth the power of thine
 "anger †? If GOD whet his glitter-
 ing

† Psal. xc. ii.

ing sword, and his hand take hold on judgment, what can withstand it, or who can sustain it? If his wrath be kindled, yea but a little, "it shall consume the earth, with her increase; "it shall set on fire the foundations "of the mountains; and burn to the "lowest hell *."

Lest you should begin to say within yourselves, these threatnings are applicable only to the *Jews*; I proceed to shew,

3. The *certain execution* of these or some such judgments on us, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.

GOD is an infinite speaker. In his word, he addresses himself to all generations of men, and to every individual of the human kind, where his holy revelation is made. It is therefore a certain rule, that when a-

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* Deut. xx xii 22.

ny people, enlightened by the glorious gospel, become, like *Jerusalem*, universally and incorrigibly corrupt; they do, in *Jerusalem's* doom, read their own.

GOD is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. He remembereth his threatnings, as well as his promises, to a thousand generations. Whatsoever, of either kind, happened to our forefathers, “happened to them, “as ensamples” to us. And “whatsoever was written aforetime, was “written for our learning.” Observe, it was written, not for our amusement, but “for our learning and admonition ||.” That we may, as in a mirrour, see our own picture, and learn our own destiny.

Is it not in a manner necessary, for the

the manifestation of GOD's inflexible justice, and his unalterable hatred of sin, that judgments should take their course; when iniquity rears its head, and refuses to be controuled? At such a juncture does not every one of the divine attributes cry aloud? "O LORD GOD, to whom vengeance belongeth; thou GOD to whom vengeance belongeth, shew thyself." — And how can the justice of GOD, with regard to a wicked nation, be shewn; but by executing his vengeance upon them, in temporal calamities?

Consider, Sirs; the very essence of political communities is temporal, purely temporal. It has no existence but in this world. Hereafter, sinners will be judged and punished, singly and in a personal capacity *only*. How then shall HE, that is *ruler among the*

nations, maintain the dignity of his government over the kingdoms of the earth, but by inflicting national punishments, for national provocations; and, for final impenitence, total destruction?

Besides; has not the LORD always acted in this manner? Go back to the generations of old. Contemplate *Sodom* and *Gomorrhah*, and the cities about them. Well watered every where, even as the garden of the LORD. Yet "this fruitful land is "made barren," these populous cities are turned into ashes, "for the "wickedness of them that dwell "therein †;" for their pride and idleness; for their voluptuous and wanton indulgencies, "for which things "sake, the wrath of GOD," not only has come, in former ages, and in distant

† Psal. cvii. 34.

distant nations; but in every age, *cometh*, and in every nation will come, “upon the children of disobedience †.”

Pass over to *Babylon*; the grandest city that the sun ever beheld. Which set calamity at defiance; saying in her heart, “I shall be a lady for ever *. How is she fallen; “swept with the “besom of destruction †!” Not so much as a trace or footstep of her ancient glory left! and shall we be safe, when those very iniquities prevail among us, which rased the foundations of the *Babylonian* metropolis, and overthrew the magnificence of the *Babylonian* monarchy?

Take a view of *Constantinople*; once the most flourishing christian city in the world. Where the first christian emperor filled the throne, and *Chrysostom* that great christian orator the pulpit.

† Col. iii. 6.

* Is. xlvii. 7.

† Is. xiv. 23.

pulpit. Then it was gloriously enlightened with the knowledge of *JESUS CHRIST*. Grace and truth dwelt in it; and the beauties of holiness adorned it. But now the candlestick is removed. It is now given up to infidelity and barbarity. Is now full of darkness, and cruel habitations.

Come hither then, ye careless ones, and see what desolation sin has made in the earth. On account of sin, *Sodom* was consumed, as in a moment; *Babylon* is totally destroyed, † *Constantinople*

† Will any, raised in their own conceit above the vulgar level, neglect these admonitions with a smile of disdain? Because they can assign the *second causes* of some such evils, as have been described, will they therefore quiet their spirits, amidst the alarming prospect of judgments from heaven?— They have heard (I make no doubt) that a midnight debauch in *Babylon* and a popular sedition in *Jerusalem*, left the gates of the former open to *Cyrus*, and the walls of the latter without defence to *Vespasian*. Perhaps they will suppose that the overthrow of *Sodom*, was occasioned by the shock of an earthquake; and that the fire from heaven was produced by sulphureous exhalations.

Constantinople has lost her glory. And have *we* a licence to sin with impunity? are our sins less heinous, than those of other people? Quite the reverse. Considering the many blessings, which we enjoy, as a nation, the
many

Be the premises ever so certain, is there any thing rational in the conclusion? Is not what we term the *course of nature*, the incessant administration of PROVIDENCE? are not many of its ordinary appearances very evident indications of a righteous and holy government, unalterably determined to punish sin? The poverty and ignominy of the lazy vagabond; the diseases of the debauchee, and the distresses of the spendthrift; are these less manifest signs of divine displeasure, because they are the immediate effects of an evil conduct? are they not as certainly the *judicial*, the *penal*, as they are the *natural* consequences of vice?

Let those therefore, who fear not judgments, compare causes and events. If indolence, avarice, and venality; if pleasure, luxury, and prodigality; if youth without principles, tradesmen without honesty, and nobles without honour; if these are allowed to be, either provoking immoralities, or fatal symptoms; I fear the ruin of *England* cannot be far off. GOD Almighty grant we ministers may not accelerate the fall of our country, by neglecting to warn every man and exhort every man, to receive the salvation of *CHRIST*, and flee from the wrath to come.

many deliverances we have enjoyed, as a protestant nation; the numberless advantages for religious knowledge and religious practice, which we both have enjoyed, and do enjoy, above all the nations on earth—considering these circumstances, our wickedness is highly aggravated; it admits of no excuse; it exceeds the abominable practices of the heathens. What then can prevent our ruin?

Will you reply? “We fast, and “humble ourselves before the LORD.”

—I ask. Do we fast from sin? are our fast-days the beginning of a gospel reformation? when we abstain from our daily bread, do we turn by faith to *JESUS CHRIST*? that “eating his flesh, and drinking his blood, “we may live through him *?” Live in holiness here and live in glory hereafter,

* John vi. 57.

after, by applying his immaculate righteousness to our souls?—If this is the case, we may entertain reviving hopes. The scripture speaks good words, and comfortable words, to such people; be their condition ever so vile, or their guilt ever so great.—But alas! are we not just the same persons, the day after our fast, as we were before? as vain in our conversation, and as forgetful of GOD? as fond of folly, and as negligent of divine grace; as mad upon our idols, of carnal gratification, and worldly gain?—If so, our fasts are not an acceptable, no, nor a reasonable service; but a mere mockery of the omniscient Majesty. May he not justly use that upbraiding expostulation; “Will ye steal, and commit adultery, and swear falsely, and walk after other Gods,” serving, not the LORD JEHOVAH, but divers

vers lusts and pleasures; *and* then with hypocritical devotion, “stand before
 “me in this house, which is called by
 “my name †?

Perhaps, you are ready to alledge;
 “Our alms will deliver us. The son
 “of *Sirach* exhorts us, to *shut up alms*
 “*in our store-houses*; and assures us,
 “that *they shall fight for us against our*
 “*enemies better than a mighty shield*
 “*and strong spear* *. And when was
 “there a greater flow of beneficence,
 “observable in our own, or in any
 “land? what sums have been given
 “to the poor, during this severe sea-
 “son of cold and scarcity! what hos-
 “pitals of various sorts and other cha-
 “ritable foundations have been set on
 “foot, and are supported through
 “the kingdom.”—Let us beware,
 brethren, lest those very things which
 we

† Jer. vii. 9. 10.

* Eccles. xxix. 12, 13.

we look upon as our recommendation, should prove an offence. If our alms proceed not from faith in *JESUS CHRIST*, and an unfeigned zeal for the glory of *GOD*; if they are not accompanied with a spirit of love to his name, and with a course of obedience to his commands: hear, what the *LORD* himself says concerning such works; see, what a figure they make in his sight; and then judge, whether they are likely to be a security to our land. “ I hate, I despise
 “ your feast-days, and I will not smell
 “ in your solemn assemblies. Though
 “ ye offer me burnt-offerings and
 “ your meat-offerings; I will not accept them; neither will I regard
 “ the peace-offerings of your fat beasts.
 “ Take thou away from me the noise
 “ of thy songs; for I will not hear
 “ the melody of thy viols,” Hymns
 of

of praise, you see, are no other than a *noise* in the LORD's ear; the most costly services of religion, are no better than a *smoke* in his nostrils; unless *judgment*, and the love of GOD; *run down as a river*; unless *righteousness*, and the faith of CHRIST abound *as a mighty stream* *.

Do you still conceit yourselves, that, because there are many righteous persons remaining, *they* will stand in the gap; *they* will turn away the anger of the LORD; and be as the chariots of *Israel*, and the horsemen of *Israel*, to our endangered state?—Hear, what a charge the supreme JEHOVAH gave to his prophet, when the provocations of *Israel* were risen to a very high pitch. “Pray not thou for this people, neither lift up cry nor pray for them, neither make intercessions
“ to

* AMOS V. 21. 22. 24.

“to me: for I will not hear thee †.”
 Amazing and awful prohibition! yet it is repeated, again and again †.—
 GOD’s professing people may, by their excessive wickedness, become so insufferably loathsome; that, were the greatest saints to make supplication in their behalf, they should not prevail. *Though Noah, Daniel, and Job*, men mighty in prayer, and zealous for the welfare of their neighbours; though these three men, (who had each by his single intercession procured blessings from heaven) were uniting their petitions in the midst of this profligate generation; “as I live, saith the LORD GOD, they shall deliver
 “neither sons nor daughters; they
 “only shall be delivered, but the land
 “shall be desolate §.

The

† Jer. vii. 16.

† Jer. xi. 14. xiv. 11.

§ Ezck. xiv. 16.

The land shall be desolate—Doleful sound! dismal decree! and has it not, long ago, been carried into execution? Was not *Jerusalem* ploughed as a field, and trodden down by the Gentiles? Are not the inhabitants rooted out of their dwellings, and scattered to all the ends of the earth? While their country is given us, for a prey and for a possession to strangers, to infidels, to *Turks*.

Perhaps, you will say; “The *Jews* “crucified the LORD of glory, and “rejected his gospel, *therefore* wrath “came upon them to the uttermost.” —And are *we* innocent in this respect? are not we verily, are not we greatly guilty, concerning this thing? is *CHRIST* received into the hearts of men, with deep adoration of his person, as *IMMANUEL GOD* with us? Do they glory and delight themselves
in

in his complete redemption, as finished by the great GOD and our SAVIOUR? Do they confide in him alone for their justification, as an infinite surety, and as JEHOVAH our righteousness? Do they depend on him alone for their sanctification, as *JESUS* who saves his people from their sins, and sanctifies them through his blood? Do they count all things but dung, for the excellency of *CHRIST*, and his incomprehensible merit?—Alas! is not his gospel, though the light of the world, disregarded and despised? Is not his name, though a name above every name, derided and blasphemed? Are not the influences of his eternal SPIRIT, though the very life of our souls, exploded and ridiculed? They who would exalt the SAVIOUR; would make every sheaf bow down to the REDEEMER's; representing him,

as the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, in the salvation of sinners, those preachers, those writers, those believers are treated as “the foolish people that dwell in “*Sichem* *.”

What the *Jews* did through ignorance, we, who call ourselves christians, *Englishmen*, protestants; we do knowingly, wilfully, and of malicious wickedness. And if we thus trample upon the blood, which alone can screen us; if we thus crucify afresh that *JESUS*, who is our only hope; what can we look for, but vengeance and fiery indignation? If we ourselves, with our own hands, demolish the only barrier; what can ensue, but an inundation of wrath, tribulation, and anguish?

Consider these things, brethren. The LORD enable you to discern the
signs

* *Eccclus. i. 26.*

signs of the times! then you will acknowledge, that we have reason to be alarmed; to tremble; to be horribly afraid.—Are not these iniquities the *Achans*, that will assuredly bring distress and trouble, if not destruction, upon our country? Are not these iniquities the *Jonahs*, that will awaken the divine displeasure, and deliver up our vessels to the tempest, if not to shipwreck?

Is any one disposed to say within himself? “Though others may be “guilty of these flagrant iniquities, “yet am not I.”—Remember, my friend, the prophet *Isaiab*. He was, at least, as free from these flagrant iniquities as yourself. Yet he laments, and with painful apprehensions, the guilt of his countrymen, as well as his own †. Remember king *Josiah*.

D

Though

† Is. vi. 5.

Though a holy man and a just, he rent his clothes, and trembled at GOD's word, denouncing vengeance against an irreligious people *.

Consider also, whether you have not been an accessory, even where you was not the principal. Though you have not joined with the more profligate sinners, have you not connived at their impiety? Do their affronts offered to the King of heaven, rouse you into a becoming zeal, to vindicate his injured honour? or, *because iniquity has abounded*, is not your love, and *the love of many, waxed old* †? Have not *we*, alas! have not *we* been cowards and traitors, while others have been professed enemies and rebels?

Besides; have not you, have not I, have not all contributed, in many, many instances, to swell the score of
national

* 2 Kings xxii. 11, 13. † Matth. xxiv. 12.

national provocations? is not every sin a disobedience of GOD's most holy command? is not every sin a defiance of his uncontrollable authority? is not every sin an imitation of the devil? does it not create a kind of hell in the heart? must it not, therefore, be inconceivably odious to the Holy, Holy, Holy LORD GOD of Sabaoth?—If so, how guilty are the very best among us! how has every one added to the load, that dreadful load, which is likely to sink the nation in ruin! should not every one, thereafter, smite upon his breast; and say with the penitent, *What have I done!* and cry with the publican, *GOD be merciful to me a sinner!*

Will you still flatter yourself? “All these judgments may be delayed. “They may not come in my time.”—I answer; if there be any truth in

GOD's word; if any conjecture is to be made from the appearance of things; these judgments are near. They are at the door. They are like the ax in the executioner's hand, which has been poised, has received its last elevation, and is now falling on the criminal's neck.—Yet if these should be withheld for a season, will not sickness come upon you? are not many disasters lying in ambush to seize you; is not death sharpening his arrow; perhaps, fitting it to the string; or even aiming at your life; is not the day, the dreadful day approaching, when the shout of the arch-angel and the trump of GOD will be heard; when the dead shall arise, and heaven and earth flee away? Will not the LORD, the LORD GOD omnipotent quickly come, “with thousands of his saints;” to execute judgment upon all, and
“to

“ to convince all that are ungodly of
 “ all their ungodly deeds, which they
 “ have ungodlily committed; and of
 “ all their hard speeches, which un-
 “ godly finners have spoken against
 “ him *.”

Take then, my dear hearers, take the advice of the greatest of preachers, and the wisest of men; “ The prudent
 “ foreseeth the evil, and hideth him-
 “ self †.”—Behold! the rains are descending, and the flood is coming; hasten like † *Noah*, hasten to your ark. See! the skies are kindling all around, and the shafts of vengeance are ready to fly. Make haste, oh! make haste, and delay not the time, to get into a hiding place.—Let me sound in your ears the angel’s admonition; and may the LORD of angels, may the friend of finners, convey it to your hearts!

D 3

“ escape

* Jude 14, 15.

† Prov. xxii. 3.

“escape for your lives, lest ye be consumed.” Lest the judgments of GOD, and the wrath of GOD, more to be feared than a deluge of waters, more to be feared than a torrent of flames, surround you suddenly—seize you unavoidably—and overwhelm you in ruin, temporal and eternal.

O! that I might prevail! O that GOD would make you sensible of your peril! O that man, woman, and child would ask; “How shall I be safe in the day of visitation? shew me the ark! shew me the refuge!”—I should then, with great satisfaction, proceed to answer this enquiry; and point out *CHRIST* to your souls, as the *only* hiding-place, as the *sure* hiding-place, where you may certainly find safety. But this must be the business, the pleasing business of my next discourse.

Let me beseech you, in the mean
time,

time, to lay these alarming truths to heart. Let them impress your conscience! let them penetrate your souls! and O thou gracious, thou Almighty LORD GOD, do thou command them to sink deep into all our minds. That we may, with *Ezra* thy priest, sit down *ashamed and astonished* †, under a sense of our manifold iniquities. —That we may, with thy servant *Job*, “abhor ourselves, and repent “in dust and ashes †.” —That we may in the words, and with the compunction of thy prophet, cry out; “Woe “is me: for I am undone: because I “am a man of unclean lips; and I “dwell in the midst of a people of “unclean lips †.”

D 4

SERMON.

† *Ezra* ix. 3.† *Job* xlii. 6.† *Isa.* vi. 5.

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S E R M O N II.

The Means of Safety.

HEB. xi. 28.

Through faith he kept the passover, and the sprinkling of blood, lest he that destroyed the first-born, should touch them.

WE have been considering the danger of our nation, occasioned—by the *sin* of its inhabitants—by the *judgments* of GOD, denounced against such sinners—by the *certain execution* of his righteous threatenings, unless we fly to the appointed refuge.—When such is the state of a nation,
it

it is high time for the watchmen on her walls, to lift up their voice. Not indeed to spread vain terrors, but to give notice of the approaching evil. To warn the unwary; to call in the stragglers; and urge every one to retire into a place of safety.

Having, in the preceding discourse, attempted to discharge this office; I shall now, brethren, as in the presence of the all-seeing GOD, ask—Have we been attentive to these things? are we alarmed with a sense of our guilt and our peril? have we, with the prophet *Isaiab*, lamented our own, and the sins of our people?—If so, we shall highly prize, we shall ardently desire, the same consolation, and the same relief, which the GOD of infinitely free goodness vouchsafed to his servant. “Then flew one of the
“seraphims unto me, having a live-

“ coal in his hand, which he had taken from off the altar, and he laid it upon my mouth.” An action, which represents the very thing, signified in the text, by “ *the sprinkling of blood **.”

The *altar* typified *CHRIST*; who is both the sacrifice that makes the atonement; and the altar, that sanctifies the gift—the *live-coal* seems to betoken the word of grace, and the word of life; which brings the glad tidings of the gospel, and testifies of the bleeding *JESUS*.—“ Laying this upon the mouth,” very significantly denotes the application of *CHRIST* and his great atonement. When this is done, under the influence of the *SPIRIT* and by means of faith, then “ iniquity is taken away and sin purged;” taken away from the sight of
of

* *Is. vi. 7.*

of GOD, and purged from the sinner's conscience. Guilt is abolished; fear ceases—but this leads us to our second particular.

II. The method of security from danger, effected by “keeping the passover, and sprinkling the blood.”

Moses was apprised of a dreadful vengeance, to be inflicted on *Egypt*. The most dreadful, that ever was known, since the beginning of their nation. So dreadful, that it would make every ear tingle, and every heart bleed. The destroying angel was to pass through all the territories of *Pharaoh*, and smite every first-born both of man and beast. So that, before the morning there should be heaps of slain in the cities, the villages, the fields. Not a house exempt; not a

D 6

family

family spared ; not a herd, not a flock, free from the fatal calamity.

Moses feared the blow.—He feared, as the text intimates, the least touch of the divine executioner's sword. Knowing, that it would crush him and his people, as a moth is crushed by the falling millstone. He is therefore greatly solicitous to provide for their welfare. But what expedient shall he use?—shall he give them orders, to close their windows, and bar their doors; to erect fortifications, and stand upon their defence? alas! before an invisible hand, armed with the vengeance of heaven, all such precautions would have been as a spark before the whirlwind.—Shall he assemble the warriors, or detach parties of soldiers to patrol the streets, and guard the houses? Vanity of vanities! the sword of the avenging angel, would

would pierce through legions and legions of such guards, as lightning penetrates the yielding air.—Shall the whole congregation bend their knees, with solemn confession of their sins, and sincere resolutions of future amendment? This was highly necessary to be done, but extremely improper to be relied on. It would have been relying on a broken reed, and despising the ordinance of the HOLY ONE.

The LORD himself appoints a method of preservation. *Moses* is directed to slay a lamb. Each family in *Israel* is to do the same. Having received the blood into a basin, they are to sprinkle it, not on the threshold, but on the lintel and side-posts of their doors. This shall be a sign to the destroying angel. Looking upon this sign, he will pass over the house; will strike

strike no blow, and execute no vengeance, where-ever he sees the blood sprinkled.—All this, in pursuance of the divine direction, being performed; with faith and tranquillity they wait the event.

You will say perhaps; what is all this to us? I answer; it is a pattern for our imitation.—Are we then to do the very same thing?—We are to do, what their practice typified. The shadow was theirs, the substance is ours. The blood of the lamb typified the blood of *CHRIST*; who is the LAMB of GOD, slain for the sins of the world.—By the blood of *CHRIST* is frequently signified, in scripture, the *whole* * merit of his life and death, of his

* *Being justified by his blood.* Rom. v. 9. That is; being pardoned, being made righteous, and heirs of all spiritual blessings—*Thou hast redeemed us to GOD by thy blood.* Rev. v. 9. That is; thou hast delivered us from all sin and all wrath;

his actions and sufferings, of his trials and graces. Which satisfied GOD's justice, and magnified GOD's law. Which made propitiation for iniquity, and brought in an everlasting righteousness.—Well does the apostle call it *precious blood*. Unspeakably precious are its effects. It appeases the wrath of GOD, revealed from heaven; and makes peace between the offended CREATOR, and the offending creature. Sprinkled on the conscience, it takes away all guilt, and secures from all vengeance—This, therefore, my brethren, this blood is our security.

This

wrath; thou hast reconciled us to the Almighty MAJESTY, and introduced us into his blissful presence --- These blessings, ascribed to our LORD's blood, are confessedly the fruit, not barely of his sufferings, but of his whole humiliation, obedience, and death. Therefore in a valuable dictionary of the most valuable words and phrases, we have this explication of the *blood of the LAMB*; "The sacrifice of CHRIST's death, together with his perfect righteousness and holiness imputed." See *Wilson's Christ. Dict.*

This is to our souls what the blood of the paschal lamb was to the *Israelitish* families. "The name of the LORD," the grace and goodness of GOD, manifested in the death and obedience of *CHRIST* "is a strong tower;" not only "the righteous" person, but the distressed creature, and the endangered sinner, "runneth unto it, and is safe †."

Since this is a point of the utmost importance, it cannot be too clearly displayed, or too strongly established. For this purpose, the scripture gives us several most amiable and instructive views of *CHRIST*, as our refuge and safety.—He is called a *hiding-place* ‡. To a hiding-place people retreat, and are secure from their enemies; even from those cruel enemies, that seek their destruction. Thus the prophets, whom

† Prov. xviii. 10.

‡ Is. xxxii. 2.

whom *Obadiab* hid by fifty in a cave, were secure from *Ahab's* tyranny, and *Jezebel's* persecution. So, the soul that flies to *CHRIST*; that takes sanctuary under the blood of sprinkling; is secure from the most formidable of all enemies. Is secure from all the wrath due to sin; and from every accusation, which Satan can bring. To such a person shall be fulfilled, what is spoken by the prophet *Jeremiab*; “when the iniquity of *Israel* shall be sought for, there shall be none; and the sins of *Judah* they shall not be found *.”

CHRIST is styled a covert from the tempest. “A man,” says *Isaiab*, that is, the GOD-Man *CHRIST JESUS*, “shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest †.” When the thunders roar,
and

* Jer. l. 10.

† Is. xxxii. 2.

and the lightnings flash; when the clouds pour down water, and a horrid storm comes on; all, that are in the open air, retire under the branches of a thick tree, or fly to some other commodious shelter. What storm can be so dreadful as the righteous vengeance of GOD, poured out upon a sinful nation? what storm can be so dreadful as the eternal vengeance of GOD, poured out upon a sinful soul? To both these we are exposed; to both these we are justly liable. But *CHRIST*'s blood and righteousness are a covert. Hither we may fly, and be screened; hither we may fly, and be safe. Safe as was *Noah*, when he entered the ark! and GOD's own hand closed the door, and GOD's own eye guided its motions. For "there is no condemnation," of any kind

kind or from any quarter, “to them
“that are in *CHRIST JESUS* *.”

CHRIST is compared to a “strong-
“hold.” “Turn ye to the strong-
“hold,” says the prophet *Zechariah* †. When soldiers fly from a victorious army, being admitted into an impregnable castle, they are beyond the reach of danger. They give their fears to the wind, and repose themselves in tranquillity. When sinners fly by faith to the dying *JESUS*, they also from henceforth are in a “tower of
“salvation ‡.” They may say, each one for himself; “Soul, take thine
“ease. All thy guilt is laid upon
“thy LORD, and punished in thy
“surety. The flaming sword of
“justice is returned to the sheath,
“having received full satisfaction from
“the sufferings of *CHRIST*. The
“curse

* Rom. viii. 1. † Zech. ix. 12. ‡ 2 Sam. xxii. 51.

“curse of a violated law is no more,
 “having been executed, to the ut-
 “most, upon the person of my RE-
 “DEEMER.. Nay, its curse is turn-
 “ed into a blessing. For, ‘*CHRIST*
 “has redeemed us from the curse of
 “the law, that the blessing of *Abra-*
 “*ham* might come upon us Gentiles ||.’
 “Even the blessing of perfect reconcili-
 “ation, and everlasting friendship,
 “with GOD most high.”

This leads me to mention another
 beautiful comparison, which represents
CHRIST, not only as the cause of
 safety, but as the source of consol-
 ation. He shall be “as rivers of water
 “in a dry place, and as the shadow of
 “a great rock in a weary land §.”—
 In a dry place, burnt up for want of
 moisture, nothing is so desirable, no-
 thing so refreshing, as water. To
 the

|| Gal. iii. 13, 14.

§ Is. xxxii. 2.

the poor sinful soul, of whose condition the parched ground is a fit resemblance, CHRIST shall be, not barely as the morning dew, not barely as the transient shower, but as a river! yea, as “rivers of water,” that flow in copious and never-failing streams thro’ the thirsty soil. Making even the sandy desert green with herbage, and gay with flowers.—In a sultry clime, where the sun pours insufferable heat, and all things languish under the glaring rays, nothing is so chearing to the labourer, nothing so welcome to the traveller as a cool and gloomy *shade*. A poor soul, assaulted by the fiery darts of Satan, and distressed with the remembrance of former iniquities, is this sultry clime or *weary land*. But CHRIST and his atonement are, not barely as the boughs of an oak, which extend their coolness
to

to a small distance; not barely as the canopy of an alcove, through which much of the glowing influence penetrates: but like the *shadow of a rock*, a *great rock*. Which projects the friendly shade, over many a league; which has repelled and excluded the sun, through all preceding ages; and gives you, as it were, "the cold of snow amidst the heat of harvest *."

Here then, brethren, is our security amidst all peril. The blood, the righteousness, the infinitely glorious person of *CHRIST*. These are our hiding-place—these are our covert—these are our strong-hold. And (blessed be *GOD*!) the doors stand wide open. They are never shut, night nor day. The access is free for any; free for all; free for the greatest sinners. We are not only allowed but
we

* Prov. XXV. 13.

we are invited; nay, we are commanded, to approach; to enter; to enjoy the protection. Or as the words of the text express it, to *sprinkle the blood* on our souls.

Sprinkle the blood on our souls! you will probably say, "What does this signify? what was done my *Moses*, when he sprinkled the visible blood, we easily apprehended. But how can we sprinkle the blood of *CHRIST*, which we never saw? the blood of *CHRIST*, whom the heavens have received?"—This is one of those mysteries, which the natural man understandeth not. He can form no notion of it. It is foolishness to his apprehension. Therefore may the eternal SPIRIT, both teach us to understand the doctrine, and enable us to practise the duty!

To sprinkle the blood of *CHRIST*,
is

is truly to *believe* in CHRIST ; in his infinite atonement, and everlasting righteousness. It is, to *receive* these blessings, as GOD's free gift to men ; to sinners ; to ourselves in particular. And, having received, to make continual *use* of them, in every time of trial, for every occasion of need.

Perhaps, this doctrine may become clearer, if we illustrate it by an example. A remarkable example we have, in the practice of *David*. After the commission of his grievous crimes, he did, in a very eminent manner, sprinkle the blood. For he said unto the LORD, " Thou shalt purge me with hyssop," (the instrument of sprinkling the typical blood) " and I shall be clean. Thou shalt wash me," in the fountain opened for sin and uncleanness, " and " I shall be whiter than snow *." This fountain

* Psal. li, 7.

fountain he looked upon, as opened for *his* sins; and fully sufficient to cleanse him from all his filthiness. So that he should be as free from spot, before the righteous Judge, as the snow on *Salmon* was free from stain.— Had he said within himself; “ My “ crimes are too great, for this blood “ to expiate. Or, this blood cannot “ be shed, for so vile an offender as I “ am.” He would then have put the atonement far from him, together with all its expiating virtue. This would have been, not to apply, but to throw away the blood: not to sprinkle it upon the soul, but to pour it upon the ground.

Come then, brethren; come, fellow-sinners; let us also, in this day of fear and danger, look unto *CHRIST* as dying that we may live; as made sin, that we may be made the righte-

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ousness

ousness of GOD in him; as made a curse, that we may inherit eternal blessedness.—Let us look unto *JESUS*, as taking our nature, and standing in our stead. Behold him, apprehended as a thief; ignominiously bound; and marked with the lashes of the scourge. Behold him, crowned with thorns; his hair clotted, his face discoloured, his breast and shoulders all bedewed, with his own most innocent blood. Behold him nailed to the cross; hanging, in the most racking posture, till his bones are out of joint; hanging amidst malefactors, forsaken of GOD, of angels, and men. Behold him, bowing his head in death, and stabbed to the heart with the executioner's spear.—Thus behold him, and say;
 “ Verily, this sufferer was the SON
 “ of GOD and LORD of glory.
 “ Verily, these sufferings were the
 “ punish-

“punishment due to *my* sins. In all
 “this extreme anguish, he bore *my*
 “griefs, and carried *my* sorrows. He
 “was oppressed, and he was afflicted;
 “because I had done amiss and dealt
 “wickedly. He was cut off out of
 “the land of the living, that he might
 “make his soul an offering for *my*
 “sins, and obtain eternal redemption
 “for *me*.”

Thus behold the blessed JESUS.
 Thus, sinners, behold the LORD
 your righteousness. With this look
 of application; with this appropriating
 faith. Be verily persuaded, that you
 shall find mercy before a holy GOD;
 not because you have any worthiness,
 but because *CHRIST* has incompara-
 ble merit: That you shall never come
 into condemnation, not because you
 have fasted and prayed, but because
CHRIST is your great propitiation.

Be persuaded, that GOD has given his SON for you; that GOD gives his SON to you; and together with him eternal life.—Be persuaded of all this, upon the best foundations, the infallible word of GOD. Who has declared, that *CHRIST* died for the *ungodly* *, and by his obedience *sinners* are made righteousness †; that *CHRIST* was wounded on the cross, and intercedes in heaven for *transgressors* ‡, that he received spiritual gifts, and divine blessings, even for the *rebellious* †.—The LORD GOD omnipotent, the author and finisher of faith, enable you thus to believe! on the ground of his own most sure word, thus to believe! Then you keep the christian passover. Then you sprinkle the blood of *CHRIST*. Then you may boldly say,

* Rom. v. 6.

† Rom. v. 19.

‡ Is. liii. 12.

‡ Psal. lxxviii. 18.

fay, “under his shadow we shall be
“safe.”—Which reminds us of the
third particular, namely,

III. The success of this method,
denoted by the destroyer not so much
as *touching* them. “Left he that de-
“stroyed the first-born, should touch
“them.”—What a beautiful Anti-
thesis! the *Egyptian* first-born were
wounded; were mortally wounded;
were absolutely destroyed. The
Israelites were not hurt; nor endan-
gered; no, nor so much as touched.
So sure and complete a defence was
this blood of sprinkling!—Nothing
else could have yielded *any* protection;
this afforded *perfect* security. When
this was sprinkled on their door-posts,
they had no need to be “afraid for
“the terrour by night, nor for the
“arrow that flieth by day; for the
E 3 “pestilence

“ pestilence that walketh in darkness,
 “ nor for the destruction that wasteth
 “ at noon-day *.

And is not the hiding-place, the covert, the strong-hold, provided for *us* in the blood and righteousness of CHRIST, an equal security? Do they not yield absolute, perfect, consummate safety? nothing else could administer the least hope to the chiefest apostle; this opens an inviolable sanctuary even for the greatest of sinners. None ever perished, who laid their help upon CHRIST. He *saves*—He *saves to the uttermost*—he saves, not a few only, but *all*—all “ that come “ unto GOD through him †.” Is our danger great? our security is greater. In short; our refuge and security are the greatest, that can be wished, that can be imagined, that GOD himself could

* Psal. xci, 5, 6.

† Heb, vii, 25.

could provide.—Chearing, charming, ravishing truth! Suffer me to enlarge upon it, brethren. Let your attention hang on the glad tidings. May your hearts imbibe the precious doctrine!

Were you pursued by an enraged enemy; you would think yourselves sufficiently safe, if you could steal away, and hide yourselves in one of the deepest caves of *America*; with a vast track of unknown land, and all the waters of the vaster ocean, between your persons and the pursuer. Much safer will your souls be under the hiding, cleansing, atoning efficacy, of this blood of sprinkling. By which unrighteousnesses are forgiven; sins are covered; and iniquities done away, as though they had never been.

Were you overtaken by a violent

E 4

storm

storm of hail or of rain? If you sought shelter under a covert, that was firmer than boards of cedar; harder than slabs of marble; thicker than the roofs of all the houses in *Europe*: you would reckon yourselves secure, from torrents of rain, or from volleys of hail. Much more secure will you be from everlasting wrath; secure, even when “the LORD shall rain snares, fire and brimstone, storm and tempest †;” provided, you are found under the covert of *CHRIST*’s magnificent and meritorious righteousness. By virtue of which, “all that believe, are justified”—I say not, from a few millions, or a few thousands of millions, but—from *all* offensive, provoking, criminal *things* ‡.

Should you be pursued by a conquering foe, determined to cut you
in

† Psal. xi. 6.

‡ Acts xiii. 39.

in pieces? if you turned into a castle, whose walls were stronger than brass, stronger than adamant, stronger than all the rocks in the world; you might laugh at the attempts of your enemy. You are free from the power of the sword. So free are you, and abundantly more free from danger, when you fly to the strong-hold of *CHRIST*'s death and atonement. The souls that abide in *CHRIST*, "they shall dwell
 "on high;" beyond the rage of the old serpent, and the great dragon.
 "Their place of defence shall be the
 "munitions of rocks *;" against which all the assaults of earth and hell, shall never be able to prevail. They may say, with the triumphant apostle; "How much more shall we,
 "who receive abundance of grace,
 "and of the gift of righteousness,"

E 5

be

* Is. xxxiii, 16.

be delivered from ruin, and “reign
“in life by *CHRIST JESUS* *?”

And will you not prize such a strong hold? shall not such a covert be dear to your guilty souls? will you not set an exceeding great value upon such a hiding-place? especially, when the storm is gathering and threatening all around. When days of desolation and perplexity are coming upon the world. And judgments, inflicted by men, may transmit us to the everlasting judgment of GOD.—How did *Israel* bless and adore their most merciful JEHOVAH, for granting them such an effectual means of preservation, as the blood of the paschal lamb! and shall we not bless and adore the same most gracious JEHOVAH, for granting us a means of preservation altogether
altogether

* Rom. v. 17.

mighty. Which is called by the apostle, *The form of GOD* †. The other nature had a beginning ; is limited as to extent, and limited as to power. This is termed by the apostle, *The seed of Abraham* *.—As GOD, he is subject to no authority, and infinitely superior to all possibility of suffering. To become capable of obeying, suffering and dying ; he humbled himself, and was found in fashion as a man. That by obeying, suffering, and dying, in human flesh : he might triumph over sin and Satan, in that very nature, which Satan had overcome, and sin had ruined. That, by accomplishing all this in the room and stead of his people, he might bring many sons unto glory ; not without a full satisfaction, to the rights of injured

† Phil. ii. 6.

* Heb. ii. 16.

jured justice, and to the demands of a violated law.

JESUS CHRIST then, in his divine nature, is the most high GOD. The heaven of heavens is the august palace, and royal residence, of this blessed and only potentate. Thousand thousands minister unto him, and ten thousand times ten thousand stand before him. The church militant rely on him; the church triumphant adore him; while all the hosts of angels pay homage to him.—*JESUS CHRIST*, in his divine nature, is the majestic and most adorable I AM. Self-existent and independent. All worlds and all beings, are derived wholly from him, and depend continually upon him. “He made the “worlds, and upholdeth all things*.” —View the beauty, the magnificence, the harmony, observable in heaven,
on

* Heb. i, 2, 3.

on earth, through the universe. All is intended, like the miracle wrought at *Cana of Galilee*, to manifest his glory †. To tell every one, who has eyes to see, and a heart to understand, how great our SAVIOUR is; how sublime his majesty; and how marvelous his perfection. All things, says the SPIRIT of inspiration, were created *by* him, and *for* him ‡.—Judge then, whether the obedience and atonement of *such* a REDEEMER, are not sufficient to secure, perfectly to secure, any sinner; every sinner; all sinners that fly by faith under his wings. As perfectly sufficient they are, for this blessed purpose; as the unmeasurable circuit of the skies, is roomy enough for a lark to fly in; or as the immense brightness of the sun, is lightsome enough for a labourer to work by.

Behold,

† John ii. 11.

‡ Col. i. 16.

Behold, now, the dignity and excellency of this blood, which is your covert, your hiding-place, your stronghold. It has all the power and efficacy, that every divine perfection can give it. It is the blood and righteousness of HIM, who is eternal, incomprehensible, and exalted above all blessing and praise. Surely then nothing can bear any proportion to it. Guilt, all guilt, though ever so execrable and horrid, compared with the grandeur and riches of this invaluable blood *, is as a glow-worm before the sun.

* St. Chrysostom's explanation of a verse lately quoted is so important in itself, and so apposite to our purpose; exhibits such a magnificent and delightful display of *the salvation which is in CHRIST JESUS*: that I promise myself, the reader will allow me to present him with a translation. *How much more shall they, who receive abundance of grace, of the gift of righteousness, reign in life by one CHRIST JESUS!* Οὐκ ἔτιν ἡ χάρις καὶ ἡ δόξα &c. "The apostle says not, "grace, but abundance of grace. For, we received, not
"barely

fun. All manner of sins and blasphemies are blotted out by such an expiation, as the shades of night are abolished

" barely what may suffice to obtain our pardon, but incomparably more. We are delivered from all punishment, and from every evil. We are justified, we are sanctified, made the children of GOD, and the brethren of his only begotten SON. We are constituted heirs, joint heirs with the Prince of heaven. Yea, we become the members of his body; most intimately and indissolubly united to that divine head.

" All these privileges, St. Paul styles *the abundance of grace*. Intimating, that the antidote is not only qualified to counter-act and expel the poison; but is sovereign also to establish health, to create beauty, to impart honour, and, from the most malignant of all evils, to produce the most distinguished blessings, any one of which, separately considered, would have been sufficient to overcome and disarm death. But under their combined influence, it is absolutely destroyed, it vanishes entirely away; and leaves not so much as a trace of mischief, or a shadow of terror.

" Let us suppose some poor debtor, owing a considerable sum; and for want of payment, cast into prison. A generous friend pitying his condition, discharges the whole debt, and releases him from confinement. And not this only, but bestows upon him splendid apparel, with thousands of silver and gold; introduces him to court, and recommends him to the royal favour, procures his advancement

lished by the light of day. Every sinner washed in this blood, must be whiter than the unfullied wool, whiter than the virgin snows. Every sinner, clothed in this righteousness, must be unblameable and unprove-
able,

" ment to the highest honours, and puts him in possession of
" the grandest preferments. Where now is the disgrace of
" his imprisonment, and where are the distresses of his in-
" solvent state?

" Such is the case with regard to us sinners, and our most
" gracious REDEEMER. He has paid inconceivably more,
" than we either did or could possibly owe. Being GOD,
" the true GOD, the infinite and eternal GOD. his payment
" exceeds our debt, as much as the waters of the great deep
" exceed the small drop of a bucket --- Doubt not therefore,
" poor sinner, that thou hast found refuge to this all-glorious SAVI-
" OUR, doubt not, but thy sins, though more virulent than
" all plagues, are done away; and death, though he be the
" king of terrors, is abolished. This abolished, and those
" done away, before such an ocean of grace and merit; e-
" ven as a spark of fire is extinguished when plunged into
" the abysses of the sea." For indeed, compared with a di-
" vine person and an infinite righteousness, whatever guilt you
" have contracted, whatever thing you can name, is, as our
" devout orator speaks, *ραυς μειρα προς τελαχος απειρον*,
" *No more than a scanty drop; compared with the boundless ocean.*
" Vid. Chrysost. in loc.

able, even before the eye of Omniscience itself.

For this, therefore, bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the LORD, O my brethren: and let every thing that hath a being, praise his unutterable grace. For "behold! GOD is "our salvation." GOD himself is made flesh, and become our sacrifice, our sin-offering, our justifying righteousness: "Therefore will we trust, "and not be afraid *;" trust in this infinitely sufficient SAVIOUR; and not be afraid of death or hell, of any enemy or any evil.—But this leads me to apply the whole. Which I shall do by way of

Examination,

Direction,

Exhortation,

* Isa. xlii. 2.

Exhortation,
Consolation.

I. By way of *examination*. “Examine your own selves,” says the apostle †. Have *you* kept the passover? have *you* sprinkled the blood?—Many, perhaps, will be ready to answer; “We have.”—but, beware, my friends, lest ye deceive your own souls. Let me give you a touchstone, whereby you may try your spirit, and pronounce aright concerning your state.

Have you been convinced of your *great sinfulness*? of your sinful nature and your sinful practice; have you been made sensible, that hell, the deepest hell, is your deserved portion? is what you deserve for any transgression—for every transgression—how much more for the many thousands—how much more for the many millions—
how

† 2 Cor. xiii. 5.

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how much more for the numberless multitude of your provocations? If you have never been convinced of these most alarming but certain truths; if you have never been touched with a sense of your extreme guilt, and undone state; I fear, you are settled upon your lees. You are in the dead sleep of sin. You are not so much as awakened; much less have you applied *CHRIST*.

Again; have you been made to see, that *nothing but CHRIST* and his precious blood, nothing but *CHRIST* and his divine righteousness, can be your security from vengeance? have you been convinced, that thousands of rams, and ten thousands of rivers of oil, could never expiate the least of your iniquities? that no tears, no confessions, no amendment, nothing but the sacrifice of the body of *CHRIST*,
can

can make your peace with GOD? If you have not been taught the absolute insufficiency of every remedy, save only the meritorious sufferings of *JESUS CHRIST*; you have not seen him, neither known him. Much less is his blood sprinkled upon your conscience.

Once more; have you a supreme, a *matchless esteem* for *CHRIST*? is *CHRIST* and his great salvation the thing that you long for; is he to your souls the pearl of great price? do you account all things but loss, that you may win *CHRIST*, and be found in him? If this is not the state of your soul, I dare not flatter you with vain hopes. I must not buoy you up with ungrounded imaginations. You are not, as yet, in your hiding-place. Neither have you fled to your strong-hold. All the curses of the divine law stand charged and
and

and pointed full against you. You have no security from being hurt by the first death, nor from being irrecoverably ruined by the second death. If judgments should come upon a sinful and backsliding people, you have no defence. There is no wall of fire around you. You must therefore expect to fall among those that fall; and falling by the sword, may immediately drop into hell.

Can you hear this and be unconcerned? can you listen to this warning, more awful than the voice of ten thousand thunders, and not start from your insensibility? are you not looking around, and ready to cry out; "What then shall I do, to be safe in the day of evil?"—O! that this enquiry came from the very bottom of your hearts. I should then proceed, with great cheerfulness, to

2. A word of *direction*.—Fly to **CHRIST**, alarmed sinners. Come under the covert of his blood. appropriate the blessed **JESUS**: look upon him and his merit as your own. Thus sprinkle his blood. Sprinkle it upon all your lintel and door-posts; upon all you are, upon all you have, and all you do. Upon your consciences, that they may be purged; upon your souls, that they may be sanctified; upon your works, that they may be accepted.—Say, every one for himself; “I am a poor, guilty, helpless creature. But in **JESUS CHRIST**, who is full of grace and truth, I have righteousness and strength *.—I am a poor, polluted, loathsome creature. But **JESUS CHRIST**, who is the image of the invisible GOD, and the brightness of his Father’s

* Isa. xlv, 24.

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“ther’s glory, has ‘loved me, and
 “washed me from my filthiness in his
 “own blood †.— I am by nature, a
 “perverse, a depraved creature; and,
 “by evil practice, a lost damnable
 “sinner. But *JESUS CHRIST*, who
 “made the worlds; *JESUS CHRIST*,
 “whom heaven and earth adore; even
 “*JESUS CHRIST* himself, came from
 “the mansions of bliss, on purpose to
 “seek me; to save me ‡; to give him-
 “self for me.—And how can I perish,
 “who have such a ransom? how can
 “I be undone, who have such a re-
 “pairer of my breaches? how can I
 “come into condemnation, who have
 “the blood, not of ten thousand sa-
 “crifices; the merit, not of ten
 “thousand angels; but the blood and
 “merit of *JEHOVAH* himself for my
 “propitiation?”

Should

† Rev. i. 5.

‡ Matt. xviii. 11.

Should you say ; “ Have I a warrant for such a trust ? ”—You have the best of warrants, our LORD’s express “ permission ; whosoever will, “ let him take the water of life freely †.” It is not said, this or that person only, but *whosoever* ; including you and me ; excluding no individual man or woman.—It is not said, whosoever is worthy, but whosoever is “ willing.” “ Wilt thou be made “ whole ? ” was our LORD’s question to the impotent man, at the pool of *Bethesda*. Wilt thou inherit grace and glory ? is his most benevolent address, to sinful men, in all ages.—*Let him take the water of life* ; let him receive ME and my righteousness ; let him look upon all that I have done and suffered, as done and suffered for

F his

† Rev. xxii. 17.

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his redemption. This will administer peace of conscience, and joy in the HOLY GHOST. This will produce love of GOD, and alacrity of obedience. In which things the true life of the soul consists.—All these blessings are to be received *freely*; without money and without price. That is without any good works, any good qualities, or any preparatory conditions whatever. To be received, as the infinitely rich gift of divine grace; vouchsafed even to the lost—the guilty—the undone.

You have our LORD's most generous *invitation*: "Come unto ME." And whom does he call? The righteous? No. The excellent? Quite the reverse. He calls sinners; miserable sinners; even the most miserable of sinners. Those who are "weary" and heavy laden;" overwhelmed with

with iniquities ; bowed down to the very brink of hell ; and ready to think, " There is no hope for them." Yet them he encourages ; them he invites ; to them he declares, " I will give you " rest *." Rest, in the enjoyment of peace with GOD, and peace in your own consciences.—Observe and admire the riches of your REDEEMER's grace. He says not, ye are vile wretches ; polluted by sin, and enslaved to the devil ; therefore keep at a distance ; but *therefore come*. Come ; and be cleansed by my blood. Come ; and be made free by my SPIRIT.—He says not, furnish yourselves with this, or that, or the other recommending accomplishments ; but only come. Come, just as you are ; poor, undone, guilty creatures. Yea, come to ME,

F 2

for

* Matt. xi. 28.

for pardon and recovery. To ME, who have given my life, myself, my all for your ransom.

Should you still question, whether these inestimable blessings are free for you? Remember, brethren, they are free for *sinners*. Is this your character? then they are as free for *your* acceptance, as for any person's in the world. "To us eternal life is given*;" not us, who have deserved it by our goodness; but us, who had forfeited it by our sins.—"To you is preached the forgiveness of sins †;" not you, whose transgressions were inconsiderable; but you, whose iniquities were more in number than the hairs of your head.—Even to you, who are the lost and perishing sinners of *Adam's* family, "is the word of this salvation
"sent."

* 1 John v. 11.

† Acts xiii. 28.

“sent †.” And by a commission from GOD, we publish it; that as sinners, you may receive it; that receiving it, you may commence believers; and “believing, may have life through his name ||.”

Some, perhaps, will be inclined to debate; “Is this so extraordinary a matter? will this exercise of *believing* do such great things for us, or put us in possession of such singular blessings?”—*Moses* might have formed the same scruple, with regard to the *sprinkling of blood*. Will this seemingly insignificant circumstance be such an extraordinary safeguard to us? will this preserve us from the impending blow, more effectually than the labours of the engineer, or the shield and spear of the warrior?—But *Moses*

F 3

consulted

† Acts xiii. 26.

|| John xx. 31.

consulted not with flesh and blood. *Moses* rejected all such carnal reasonings. By faith, he and his people kept the passover, and were made partakers of the temporal salvation. By faith may you and I receive *CHRIST*? so shall we be partakers of pardon and eternal salvation.

By believing the promise of *GOD*, and by trusting in the person of *CHRIST*, we are united to the *LORD JESUS* *. So as to have a real interest in his blood and righteousness. Being united to *CHRIST*, our sins are done away, by virtue of his infinitely precious atonement: and eternal life becomes ours, on account of his everlasting righteousness.—Whoever thus believes; believes merely as a sinner, not upon the supposition of any goodness

* Eph. iii. 17.

ness in himself, but upon the sole warrant of GOD's promise, in the infallible word of the gospel. Such a person shall not be ashamed of his belief; shall never be disappointed of his hope; "according to his faith shall it be unto him †."

Come then, fellow-sinners, believe the record of heaven. Set to your seal, that GOD is true. Honour his word, which cannot lie. Honour his grace, which is absolutely free. Honour his dear SON, who has obtained eternal redemption, for such unworthy creatures as you and I. What shall hinder you?—But this leads me to,

3. A word of *exhortation*. I say then, what shall hinder you? What shall withhold you, a single moment, from believing? "since all things are ready ‡" in *CHRIST JESUS*. The

F 4

great

† Matt. ix. 29.

‡ Matt. xxii. 4.

great propitiation is made by him. The perfect obedience is performed by him. All the conditions of the new covenant are fulfilled by him. Come then, and partake of the heavenly blessings: as you partake of a marriage-feast, when the entertainment is all prepared, and the bridegroom bids you welcome.

Fain would I prevail in this most important address. LORD, make bare thy arm; incline their hearts; "make them willing in the day of thy power*."—My dear friends, if you turn away from such invitations, you are ruined to eternity. Misery awaits you here, and damnation hereafter. Suffer me then to be importunate. Refuse not HIM that calleth you by my mouth; that bids you trust, and not be afraid: that offereth himself,

* Psal. cx. 3.

himself, with all his fulness to you.
—Why are you backward? why slow
of heart to believe? why do you
stand at a distance from the all-gra-
cious *JESUS*?

Is it because you are guilty wretches?
Then he publishes the act of indemni-
ty to you; “I, even I, am he, that
“blotteth out your transgressions for
“mine own sake †.”—Is it because
you are polluted creatures; loathsome
in your own eyes, and much more
loathsome in the eye of infinite puri-
ty! Then hear the word of the HO-
LY ONE; “I will sprinkle clean wa-
“ter upon you, and ye shall be clean.
“From all your filthiness, and from
“all your idols will I cleanse you ‡.”
—Is it because your sins are more nu-
merous and more heinous, than the

F 5

sins

† Isa. xliii. 25.

‡ Ezek. xxxvi. 25.

sins of others? Be they ever so numerous, or ever so highly aggravated, thus saith the GOD of immensely rich grace in *CHRIST*, “ Though your
 “ sins be as scarlet, they shall be as
 “ white as snow ; though they be red
 “ like crimson, they shall be as
 “ wool *.”

Are you still objecting? “ I am
 “ weak. I have no strength. I cannot believe.”—Look, then, to a promising GOD; that he may help your unbelief. That he may fulfil in you all the good pleasure of his will, and the work of faith with power. For HE, who is truth itself, has said,
 “ Your GOD will come, and save
 “ you. Then shall the eyes of the
 “ blind be opened, and the ears of
 “ the deaf shall be unstopped: the
 “ lame

* Isa. i. 18.

“lame man shall leap as an hart, and
“the tongue of the dumb shall sing†.”

—Has the LORD given you a desire to believe in his dear SON? Doubt not but he will also give you the power. Does GOD the LORD bring to the birth, and not give strength to bring forth? That be far from HIM! The suspicion be far from us! He has, in unspeakable mercy, appointed his blessed SPIRIT for this purpose. The HOLY GHOST the comforter attendeth continually on this very thing. To testify of CHRIST, and to reveal CHRIST in our sinful souls. Enabling us to discern the all-sufficiency of CHRIST; to discern our right to make use of CHRIST; and to receive CHRIST as our own—*our own* GOD and SAVIOUR.

F. 6

Be.

† Isa. xxxv. 4, 5, 6.

Be it then your daily endeavour, your continual business, to believe; firmly, confidently, assuredly to believe in JESUS CHRIST; as the great and glorious REDEEMER, in whom *you* have pardon, *you* have righteousness, and eternal life. Thus exercise yourselves unto godliness, and “GOD will help you; GOD will strengthen you; yea, GOD will uphold you with the right-hand of his righteousness.”—Thus exercise yourselves unto godliness, depending on the divine faithfulness; proceeding upon the divine warrant; in obedience to the divine command, which expressly says; “Believe in the LORD your GOD, so shall ye be established. Believe his prophets, so shall ye prosper *. Believe in his dear SON, so shall ye be saved †.”

Pharaoh

* 2 Chron. xx. 22.

† Acts xvi. 31.

Pharaoh said to *Joseph*, “ Now
 “ thou art commanded, this do *.”
 Let me also say to my hearers ; Now
 ye are allowed, invited, commanded
 to believe in the SON of GOD, this
 do. ’Tis your grand concern. The
 one thing needful. Without this no-
 thing will profit you. Therefore I
 repeat my exhortation. Therefore I
 am so urgent. Therefore I cannot
 dismiss the subject, without beseeching
 the FATHER of mercies, to command
 a blessing upon the word. That you
 may indeed “ believe † unto righte-
 “ ousness,” unto life, unto salvation.
 Thus will you glorify the ineffable good-
 ness of GOD, and the inestimable merit
 of CHRIST. Thus will you find a sure,
 a full, an incomparably rich provision
 made for your safety. And thus will
 you most effectually comply with that
 tender

* Gen. xlv. 19.

† Rom. x. 10.

tender and gracious invitation of the LORD your GOD; "Come, my people, enter thou into thy chambers, and shut thy doors about thee: hide thyself as it were for a little moment, until the indignation be overpast. For behold! the LORD cometh out of his place, to punish the inhabitants of the earth for their iniquity *."

And what will ye do, when the LORD cometh forth to punish, if you are not received into the hiding-place?—What will ye do, ye men of *sober* and *decent* conversation; who have nothing but an outward regularity, and some customary conformity to religious worship? These, though in their place valuable, yet are no security. They are only the out-works, not your citadel. When the righteous,

* Isa. XXvi. 20, 21.

righteous Judge “shall be revealed
 “from heaven in flaming fire to take
 “vengeance on them that obey not
 “the gospel †;” these, without the
 blood sprinkling, will be but as a
 withered leaf amidst the inextinguish-
 able burning.

What will ye do, ye men of *wealth*
 and large possessions? “Will riches
 “profit you, in the day of wrath ‡?”
 Will riches protect you, in the day of
 the LORD’s controversy? Alas! they
 will mark you out for a prey, and
 serve only to lure the vultures. If
 riches have been your idol; hoarded
 up in your coffers, or lavished out
 upon yourselves; they will, when the
 day of reckoning comes, be like the
 garment of pitch and brimstone, put
 upon the criminal condemned to the
 flames.

What

† Theſſ. i. 7, 8.

‡ Prov. xi. 4.

What will ye do, ye *mighty men* of valour? If the LORD turn his hand upon you, your heart shall fail, and your knees be feeble; your arm shall lose its strength, and your sword shall lose its edge. Your fleets and armies *shall be as tow*, and the commanders of them “as a spark; and they shall both burn together, and none shall quench them*.”—If you are not sheltered and secured by this blood, what will ye do, when the shout of the archangel is made, and the trumpet of GOD is heard? Undaunted as you now seem, you will then, in an agony of despair, “call upon rocks to fall upon you, and mountains to cover you †.”

What will ye do, ye *voluptuous men*, and ye *careless women*? Ye that eat the lambs out of the flock, and the calves.

* Isa. i. 31.

† Rev. vi. 16.

calves out of the midst of the stall?
 Ye that drink wine in bowls, and
 anoint yourselves with the chief oint-
 ments? Ah! what will ye do, when
the whole land, for the universal de-
 generacy of its inhabitants; for their
 contempt of CHRIST, and neglect of
 grace; “shall become brimstone, and
 “salt, without burning. Infomuch
 “that it shall not be sown, nor bear,
 “nor any grafs grow thereon †.”
 Much more may I ask, what will ye
 do? When the heavens shall pass away
 with a great noise; when the ele-
 ments shall melt with fervent heat;
 when the whole earth, and all the
 works that are therein, shall be burnt
 up?

What will ye do, people of *all* ranks
 and conditions; when “mischief shall
 “come

† Deut. xxix. 23.

“ come upon mischief, and rumour
 “ shall be upon rumour †?” When
 your houses shall be laid in heaps, and
 your streets be made a place of graves?
 When your cities, that were full of
 inhabitants, shall be solitary; and not
 a voice heard amidst them, but sighs
 of the disconsolate, and groans of the
 dying? When your children shall be
 slaughtered in one place; your pa-
 rents in another; and the “ slain shall
 “ lie behind the slayer, as the sheaves
 “ * behind the reaper in the time
 “ of harvest.”—But above all, what
 will ye do, when the great white
 throne is erected; when the earth and
 the heavens flee away, from the face
 of HIM that sitteth thereon; and the
 dead, both small and great, stand be-
 fore GOD to be judged? Without the
 blood

† Ezek. vii. 26.

* Jer. ix. 22.

blood of sprinkling, where can you be safe? How will you appear? What will you do?—Whereas, if CHRIST and his blood are yours, all is yours. You have nothing to fear, in time or eternity. “O! well is it with you, and happy shall you be.” But this reminds me of adding a word,

4. By way of *consolation*.—Possibly, you may be ready to enquire; “What consolation will this administer under the appearance of national calamities?” Very great. *Fear not*, says the LORD, *for I have redeemed thee* †. Redemption by CHRIST, is a preservative from all terror, and an antidote against every evil. When this blood is sprinkled, sin is done away, and GOD is appeased. His promises are your portion, and his arm
is

† Isa. xliii, 1.

is your defence. For the comfort of such people it is written ; “ He shall
 “ deliver thee in six troubles ; yea, in
 “ seven there shall no evil touch thee.
 “ In famine, he shall redeem thee
 “ from death ; and in war, from the
 “ power of the sword. Thou shalt
 “ be hid from the scourge of the
 “ tongue ; neither shalt thou be afraid
 “ of destruction when it cometh †.”
 In the hands of this reconciled and faithful CREATOR, this unwearied and almighty DELIVERER, how safely may you deposit yourselves and your families, your possessions and your all !

Be not then discouraged, ye followers of CHRIST, though troublous times should come. All creatures, and all events, are under the controul
 of

†, Job v. 19, 20, 21,

of your heavenly FATHER. If he has any farther occasion for your service, or sees it conducive to your good, he will preserve you amidst the greatest dangers. He can draw a curtain of concealment over you, as he did over *David* in the cave *. He can plant an invisible guard around you, as he did around *Elisba* in *Dothan* †. He can turn the hearts of your adversaries, and make even the enemy and the avenger to be at peace with you; as he did in the case of *Jacob*, and his enraged brother.—Or, if you fall in the common calamity, “your latter end shall be peace.” Your inheritance is unalienable, and “your joy no man taketh from you.” Your best things, your eternal interests,

* 1 Sam. XXIV. 3.

† 2 Kings vi. 27.

terests, are secure; inviolably secure; being *hid with CHRIST in GOD* †.

Happy, unspeakably blessed and happy the people, on whom this blood is sprinkled! If vindictive visitations come upon the land, this may screen and protect their persons; like the mark, which the man clothed with linen, set on the forehead of GOD's chosen ones*; or like the line of scarlet thread, which *Rahab* the harlot bound to the window of her house ‖. However, by this blood of reconciliation, all afflictions shall be disarmed, and every evil unstung. Nay, *all things*, not in prosperity only, but in adversity likewise, "shall work together for good §." Death, even death,

† Col. iii. 3.

* Ezek. xi. 6.

‖ Josh. ii. 18, 19.

§ Rom. viii. 28. This seems to be the meaning of the HOLY GHOST, in the passage lately quoted from *Job*.

death, is vanquished for them, and become their gain. And the last judgment is no longer their terrour, but their unspeakable privilege. Being justified by this blood, they may even “glory in tribulation; and rejoice in “hope,” in sure and stedfast hope, *of the glory of GOD* †.

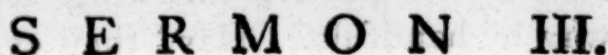
Will ye not then, brethren, ardently join with me; while I lift my voice to GOD in the heavens and say; “Awake, awake, O arm of the LORD; “let this be a day of thy power, and “a day of our redemption. Behold,
“O

In six, in manifold and various troubles GOD shall deliver thee. Or, if he suffer thee to be involved in seven, there shall no evil touch thee. His gracious presence shall be more than deliverance. Thou shalt not feel anguish, but enjoy comfort. Thou shalt not suffer harm, but receive benefit. Though the flames of tribulation kindle all around, they shall not consume thee, but only loose thy bonds and set thee free. Set thy affections free, from a troublesome world; or set thy soul free, from a prison of clay.

† Rom. v. 1, 2, 3.

" O GOD our SAVIOUR, and look
 " upon thy various congregations.
 " See, what a gathering of the people
 " there is in thy courts; let there be
 " as great a gathering of souls to thy
 " blessed self. Fulfil the prophecy,
 " Almighty SHILOH! Let sinners,
 " won by the discovery of thy grace,
 " fly unto thee as a cloud; and take
 " shelter in thy wounds, as the doves
 " in their windows! That they may
 " rest in the day of trouble; and,
 " when time shall be no more, may
 " enter into that everlasting rest,
 " which remaineth for the people of
 " GOD." *Amen!*

S E R M O N



The Way of Holiness.

EZEK. xviii. 27.

*When the wicked man turneth away from
his wickedness that he hath committed,
and doeth that which is lawful and
right, he shall save his soul alive.*

MAny of my hearers, I observe, are husbandmen; and the season, if I mistake not, is the season of *seed-time*. I will suppose a person, unskilled in your business, brethren, taking notice of your work. Perhaps, he goes home, and says—
“What strange inconsiderate crea-
G tures

“ tures have I seen in the field ? I saw
 “ them, instead of laying up their
 “ corn in the garner, throwing it a-
 “ way by handfuls. Nay, they even
 “ buried it in the ground, and left it
 “ to putrefy under the clods. Is this
 “ the way, to improve their stock,
 “ and increase their substance ? Is this
 “ the way, to get gain, and provide
 “ for their families ?”

Should any one make such a reflection on your conduct, you have an answer ready. The same answer only with an alteration of circumstances, will be equally proper for your preacher. It is true, his usual subjects are, The absolutely free grace of GOD, and the immensely rich merits of CHRIST; the infinite atonement, and everlasting righteousness of the REDEEMER. But because he generally enlarges upon these doctrines, is
 he

he therefore throwing away his words? Does he *neglect* the cause, or *disregard* the interest of *holiness*? Far from it. He is sowing the seed of vital holiness. Without which seed, holiness will never flourish in your hearts; will never bring forth fruit in your lives; any more than your ploughed lands would produce a crop of corn, without receiving the appointed grain. It is “through the knowledge of our” adorable SAVIOUR, “as calling us to glory and virtue,” that “we have all things pertaining unto life and godliness *; unto the enjoyment of life eternal, and the practice of true godliness.

To convince you, that this is my aim, I have chosen a text full to the purpose; and not unfuitable to the

G 2

occasion

* 2 Pet. i. 3.

occasion of our present assembly.

“ When the wicked man turneth a-
 “ way from his wickedness that he
 “ hath committed, and doth that
 “ which is lawful and right, he shall
 “ save his soul alive.”

The words naturally divide themselves into the following particulars ;

- I. What the wicked man should turn from—*Wickedness.*
- II. What he should turn to—*To that which is lawful and right.*
- III. What will be the effect of such turning—*He shall save his soul alive.*

May CHRIST JESUS, the head of his church, and the Wonderful Counsellor, enable us to open these truths; to a word of lively application ;

tion; and to receive godly edifying from the whole!

I. What the wicked man should turn *from*—Wickedness. Here perhaps you expect, that I should mention several sorts of wickedness; should display the detestable nature, and destructive consequences of each; and deter you, by such considerations, from the commission of them all. Deter you from lying, and defrauding; from cursing and swearing; from drunkenness and uncleanness; from a spiteful temper and a backbiting tongue. These are horrid evils. On account of these the land mourns. These bring the vengeance of GOD on a person, and on a people *. If I could speak in thunder, I could never inveigh too loudly against these

G 3

vices.

* Col. iii 6.

vices. “Ye that go on in such iniquities, ye are *scattering brimstone up-
on your habitations* †, ye are *heaping
up wrath, against the day of wrath* ‡.
How can ye escape the damnation of
hell §?”

BUT let me forbear such invectives. Let me reason with you, in the spirit of mildness.—I will suppose you possessed of a pleasant garden. In some favourite bed, many weeds spring up, alluring to the eye, but full of deadly poison. Will you order your gardener, to crop off the *leaves*, or to pluck up the *roots*?—To pluck up the roots, most certainly. Because, if he does the former only, it will avail but little; it will be no better than labour lost. Whereas, if he does the latter, he will effectually rid your ground of
the

† Job. xviii. 25.

‡ Rom. ii. 5.

§ Matt. xxiii, 33.

the pernicious encumbrance.—Thus would I act. Wickedness is this *pernicious* weed. It is full of deadly poison. It pollutes your souls, and will be the bane of your happiness. I would not therefore be content with using the pruning-knife, and cutting off the shoots. But I would take the spade, and level my blow at the root.

I would fain have you turn, not partially and superficially, but *thoroughly* and *habitually*—Not from some only, but from *all* wickedness—And not barely from the practice, but even from the *love* of it, and any *fondness* for it—This will never be accomplished, unless you turn

From a <i>thoughtless</i>	} State.
From a <i>prayerless</i>	
From an <i>insensible</i>	

1. From a *thoughtless* state.—You are made for eternity. You are immortal beings. You must dwell either with GOD in heaven, or with devils in hell; and that to endless, endless ages. You know not, how soon you may be summoned into the invisible and eternal world. The following night, for aught you can tell; or before the present hour is expired. Do you seriously consider, to which of these everlasting abodes you are approaching? For which of these unchangeable conditions you are meet?

“Except a man be born again,” says our LORD, “he cannot enter “into the kingdom of heaven ||” This is the unalterable resolution of the righteous Judge. You all hope for heaven; and I humbly beseech the

the LORD, that you may not be disappointed of your hope. But do you diligently enquire, whether you have experienced this new birth? Is there a spiritual change wrought in your souls? Are your affections taken off from vanity, and fixed on the infinitely amiable GOD? Is your memory filled with the truths of the gospel, and are your desires rising to things above? To expect the blessedness of heaven, and have no concern about this renewal of your name, is to condemn the counsels of CHRIST, and to trifle with his unalterable decree.

“ Without holiness no man shall see the LORD †.” This is the standing rule for our present conduct, and indispensibly necessary for our future happiness. You may be civil and de-

G 5

cent.

† Heb. xii. 14.

eent in your behaviour ; you may attend the place of divine worship, and pass for reputable persons. Yet, unless you are holy in your hearts, and holy in your conversation, you cannot enter into GOD's blissful presence. To be holy, is to *put on* CHRIST † ; to resemble CHRIST, in your spirit and carriage, as one man resembles another, when he puts on his dress, or imitates his manners. Do you look to CHRIST, as your pattern ; follow CHRIST, as your guide ; and, in the general course of your life, walk as CHRIST walked ?—Perhaps, you have never so much as aimed at this. Never so much as seriously considered eternity, regeneration, and a conformity to CHRIST. These things are seldom, if ever, in your thoughts.

Then

† Rom. xiii. 24.

Then be assured, you are far from holiness. You are not turned from your evil way; no, nor so much as *beginning* to turn.

SAY not, " This duty of serious consideration is a slight matter. If I had been guilty of injustice or perjury; if I had committed adultery or murder; these indeed were heinous crimes. Whereas the omission, which you have insisted on, is but a small offence."—*Small offence!*

Presume not to think so. However such guilt may appear little in your view, or sit easy upon your conscience, it is heinous enough to make heaven and earth amazed. For " thus saith the LORD; Hear, O heavens, and give ear, O earth! I have nourished and brought up children, and they have rebelled against me. The ox knoweth his owner, and the

“ as his master’s crib : but *Israel* doth
 “ not know, my people DOTH NOT
 “ CONSIDER *.” To say the truth;
 an inconsiderate careless life, is an un-
 interrupted course of sin. It is one
 continued act of rebellion against God.
 —It opposes his compassionate wish;
 “ O! that they were wise! That they
 “ understood this! That they would
 “ consider their latter end †!”—It dis-
 obeys his positive command; “ Thus
 “ saith the LORD of hosts,” the su-
 preme Ruler of the world, “ Consider
 “ your ways ‡.”—It defeats the design
 of his holy word, and would make
 the blood of his SON to be of none
 effect.

2. Turn from a *prayerless* state.—
 Alas! how many of those, whom we
 call Christians, are strangers to prayer!
 How

* Isa. i. 2, 3.

† Deut. xxxii. 29.

‡ Hag. i. 5, 7.

How many *servants* rise to their work and never bend a knee before their MASTER in heaven ! How many *masters* set their servants an ungodly example ; enter upon the affairs of the day, without imploring the GOD of all grace, either to prosper their business, or to sanctify their souls ! How many *parents* know not what it is, to make earnest supplications for the conversion and salvation of their children ! And how many *children* are as ignorant of the nature, the necessity, the advantages of prayer, “ as the “ wild ass’s colt * !”

Shall I reckon *these* good people ? Are these turned to their GOD ? No ; they are despisers of the most HIGH. They cast contempt upon his Majesty. The language of their practice is ;
“ Depart

* Job xi, 12.

“Depart from us. Omnipotent as
 “thou art, we have no need of
 “thee. No need of thy SPIRIT, to
 “make intercession *in* us; no need
 “of thy SON, to make intercession
 “*for* us.”—Most justly, therefore, is
 it reckoned by *Eliphaz*, as part of a
 wicked and abandoned character;
 “Thou restrainest prayer before
 “GOD †.” Nay, it is mentioned by
 the psalmist, as the finishing part;
 that which seals up the soul under
 the dominion of iniquity, and shuts
 out all reasonable hope of a reforma-
 tion. “They are corrupt; they do
 “abominable works;” and there is no
 prospect of their doing otherwise,
 since “they call not upon the
 “LORD ‡.”

Religious, yet neglect prayer! Im-
 possible.

† Job xv. 4.

‡ Psal. xiv. 4.

possible. Can a man live without food? Can he breathe without air? No more can you withstand temptation, or exercise godliness, unless you *watch unto prayer* †.—The neglect of prayer, is not only sinful in itself, but the sure sign of an un sanctified heart, and the wide inlet to every unrighteous practice. “Shew me a prayerless person, said one, and I will shew you a graceless person.”—Turn then, sinners, turn without delay, to a habit of prayer; of secret, serious, earnest prayer. Otherwise, you cannot expect, that the wrath of GOD should be turned away from you. No; when he whets his glittering sword, and his hand takes hold on judgment, *you* are the persons that cause the indignation. *You* are the persons,

† Eph. vi. 18.

persons,* who have reason to tremble at the stroke. For thus it is written in that venerable book, which is a transcript of the divine will, and the rule of the divine procedure; “ Pour
 “ out thy fury upon the heathen, that
 “ know thee not ; pour out thy fury,
 “ upon the families, that call not on
 “ thy name †.

3. Turn from your *insensible* state.
 —Be sensible of your guilt ; your misery ; your ruin. Thoughtless and prayerless people, you are sinners before the GOD of heaven. You are the children of his wrath. You are the objects of his vengeance. Condemned and accursed by his holy word. O! may the LORD of all power, rend the veil from your understandings, and shew you your perilous,

† Jer. x. 25.

rilous, your dreadfully perilous condition.

If, while I am speaking, the *earth* should *reel* to and fro, and be in strong convulsions under your feet; if it should open its horrid jaws, and gape frightfully wide to devour you; not one in the assembly, but would be greatly alarmed. How then can you be careless and unconcerned, when hell from beneath is opening her mouth, to swallow you up in endless perdition?—If this building was *rocking* over your heads, and tottering on every side; if the beams were bursting, and the walls cleaving; you would be struck with astonishment. And how is it, that you are under no apprehensions, when the indignation of an Almighty GOD is ready to fall upon you; and, worse than ten thousand falling millstones, grind you to powder?

powder?—If the *French* were landed, with an army of desperate *Papists*; if you were furrounded by those barbarous enemies of your religion and country; if their swords, reeking with *British* blood, were now at your throats, you would tremble for your lives. And will you not feel some concern for your souls, when the sword of Omnipotence is sharpened to cut you in pieces; when, for aught you know, it may be already unsheathed; may have received a commission to give the fatal blow; and, before another hour passes, may actually strike.—If the late distemper among the cattle, should turn to a *plague* among men; if it should sweep away thousands and ten thousands to an untimely grave; if you should see multitudes of your neighbours *sicken- ing, dropping, dying* on every side; certainly

certainly you would be terrified. How then can you remain unimpressed, when the curse * of GOD is approaching you? When the curse of GOD is hovering over you? When the curse of GOD is ready to be poured out upon you; and turn all your delights into weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth.

Behold then, sinners, inconsiderate insensible sinners, you are this day impleaded at GOD's bar. You are found guilty before the JUDGE of the world. You are upon the very brink of everlasting destruction.—Not the earth, but *hell*, is opening her mouth to devour you. Not the stones and timber of your houses, but the *vengeance* of the most HIGH, is rushing down upon you. The sword, not of an

* Gal. iii. 10.

an enraged adversary, but of GOD's most *tremendous* displeasure is drawn, perhaps stretched out to destroy you. The pestilence, or what is infinitely more to be dreaded, than the pestilence that walketh in darkness, the *curse* of GOD is ready to break forth upon you.—And will not these terrors awaken you; alarm you; persuade you †?—Thou GOD of the world, and GOD of our souls, let not thy judgments and thy threatenings go forth in vain!

I hope, some of you are inclined to ask—How, or to what should we be persuaded? If so, my second particular will suggest the proper answer.

II. What the wicked man should *turn to*?—"To do that which is lawful and right." To repent of sin,
and

† 2 Cor, v. 31.

and love GOD; to be pure in heart, and holy in all manner of conversation. This is implied in the exhortation of the text. This is the indispensable duty of all men. And to promote this, is the continual aim of our ministry.

But you are guilty, ruined, impotent creatures.—*Guilty*; and can you, under a load of trespasses, arise and do your LORD's will?—*Ruined*; and can you, amidst such discouraging circumstances, have any heart to set about the work of reformation?—*Impotent*; and can you, under the most deplorable weakness, perform the most difficult of all services?—No. You must first be relieved and enabled, before you can be sufficient for these things. Like the woman bowed down with a spirit of infirmity, or like the impotent man at the pool of *Bethesda*,

Bethesda, you must receive restoration and strength from GOD your SAVI-OUR. Turn then to CHRIST, who says by his prophets; "O Israel, thou hast destroyed thyself, but in ME is thy help †."

If you should enquire; What shall I find in CHRIST?—All that you can want. All that you can wish. Incomparably more than I am able to express. For "it hath pleased the FATHER, that in CHRIST should all fulness dwell †."

Because you are *guilty*, and have a burden of iniquity on your souls, HE is "the Lamb of GOD, that taketh away the sin of the world *." A lamb of GOD's own appointing: A lamb of infinite excellence and dignity: to whom nothing is equal, nothing

† Hof. xiii. 9.

† Col. i. 19.

* John i. 29.

thing comparable. This Lamb of GOD has shed his blood for sinners ; has suffered death for sinners ; yea, has died in their stead, and endured all that vengeance, which they have deserved. In this most wonderful and perfect manner, has he obtained their pardon ! Pardon, not of some only, but of all sins. Be they ever so numerous, or ever so heinous, it maketh no difference with him. An infinite SAVI-OUR taketh away millions, unnumbered millions of the most abominable iniquities, with as much ease, as he expiates a single offence, or the smallest fault. “ He blotteth out transgressions,” aggravated transgressions, innumerable transgressions, “ as a cloud * ;” as easily, and as completely, as the wind sweeps away a floating

* Is. xlv, 22.

floating cloud, from the face of the sky. Delivered from this load of guilt, you will be fitted to *walk* in the way of GOD's commandments, "and "not be weary;" yea, "to run and "not faint *."

Because you are *ruined*, and have nothing that may recommend you to the most high GOD, CHRIST has brought in a righteousness—a complete righteousness—a divine righteousness. Consider the unspotted purity of his nature, and the unfinning obedience of his life; consider his fervent charity to man, and his patient resignation to GOD; consider all his exalted virtues, and all his exemplary actions; these, all these, in their utmost perfection, are not only for the imitation, but for the justification also,

* If. xl. 31.

So, of such finners as you and I.—
 “His name is JEHOVAH,” which
 speaks incomprehensible grandeur in
 him; “JEHOVAH our righteous-
 ness †, which speaks unutterable
 comfort to us. In this righteousness
 we may be fully accepted, and enti-
 tled to life eternal. Of this we may
 make our boast, and say; “In the
 “LORD have I righteousness *;” I,
 a transgressor, have a real righteous-
 ness; I, a defective creature, have a
 consummate righteousness; I, a frail
 relapsing Christian, have an invariable
 and everlasting righteousness. O!
 What a treasure is this! What an un-
 speakable gift is this! Is there a cor-
 dial, that can revive our spirits; is
 there a motive, that can animate us
 to duty; like justification through

H

IM-

† Jer. xlii. 6.

* Is. xlv. 24.

IMMANUEL's righteousness?—Blessed LORD! This makes thy yoke easy, and thy burden light.

Because you are weak and *disabled*, CHRIST has the *residue* of the SPIRIT *; the *fulness* of the SPIRIT †; the *seven* SPIRITS of GOD are before his throne ‡. The HOLY GHOST, in all his operations, and with all his graces, CHRIST sends to whomsoever he pleases §—He gave this inestimable blessing to Saul the persecutor and blasphemer. He gave this inestimable blessing to many of his murderers and crucifiers. He still confers the heavenly gift on his enemies, “yea, on the rebellious also ||.” And *the promise*, the free gracious promise, “is to you, and your children; and “to all that are afar off, even as “many

* Mal. ii. 15. † Col. i. 19 ‡ Rev. i. 4.
§ John xvi. 7. || Psal. lxxviii. 19.

“many as the LORD our GOD,” by the preaching of the gospel, *shall call* †.

How salutary and beneficial are the effects of this gift! Our LORD himself, who best knew, has admirably shewn. “He that believeth on ME, “out of his belly shall flow rivers of “living water.” Thus spake he of the SPIRIT, which every one, that turns to him, and believes on him, shall receive. Observe some beautiful and copious river. How it exhilarates the country, and fructifies the soil, through which it passes. Bestows a thousand conveniences, and gives birth to a thousand delights, wherever it takes its winding course. So, the COMFORTER dwelling in the heart, gives such charming views of

H 2

CHRIST

CHRIST and his unfearchable riches, as gladden the conscience, and make us truly happy. Hence, as from an inexhaustible source, true holiness flows, and every spiritual good. This disposes us to love our neighbour: this teaches us to be meek in spirit: and this will raise our desires far above earthly, sensual, transitory things; even as David's thoughts were raised far above the shepherd's scrip, when he sat exalted on the throne of Israel.

Under the influence of this divine SPIRIT, you will say; "CHRIST
 " has taken away the execrable filth
 " of my sins; and shall I wallow in
 " the mire of iniquity again?—
 " CHRIST has delivered me from the
 " pit of everlasting destruction; and
 " shall I leap into those unquenchable
 " flames, from which, as a brand, I
 " have

“ have been snatched?—In my adorable REDEEMER I have a perfect
 “ righteousness, and am completely
 “ justified. And shall I not endeavour
 “ to walk worthy of such favours;
 “ to shew my gratitude for such beneficence, by bringing forth the
 “ fruits of righteousness in all my
 “ conversation?”

Yes, brethren; when you are turned to CHRIST; to receive his atonement, to rely on his righteousness, to be filled with his SPIRIT; it will be with your soul, as it is with the *earth*, when it is turned to the *sun*. The earth, you see, is now barren and unfruitful; because, it has been very much withdrawn, from the enlivening beams of the sun. E’er long it will be replaced under the full influences of that fountain of light and heat. Then what a change will

take place! How will the flowers appear on the ground! How will the leaves adorn the trees! How will the singing of birds be heard in our land! So shall happiness, and a heavenly temper, be produced in your souls. So shall obedience, with all the fruits of godliness, flourish in your lives. When this *sun of righteousness*, manifests himself in your hearts; makes you partakers of his salvation; and thus “arises upon you, with healing “under his wings *.”

Should any one doubt, whether *this* is the way to do that which is lawful and right; I ask—Is it not a *pleasing* way? Such as we should wish for? Such as we should prefer above all others? And such as will render our LORD’s service perfect freedom?
—Is

* Mal. iv. 2.

—Is it not a *rational* way? Apparently adapted to engage the heart; to strengthen the hand; and, thereby, to fit the whole man for every good work?

Besides; is it not the way appointed by GOD?—Would we “earnestly *repent*, and be heartily sorry for all “our misdoings?” The wisdom of GOD assures us, this sorrow must arise from believing views of CHRIST. From “looking unto him, whom we “have pierced†.” Looking unto him, as wounded for *our* transgressions, and bruised for *our* iniquities. This, if any thing, will incline us, to be afflicted, and mourn, and weep for all our abominations. Thus, and thus only, shall we experience that “godly “sorrow, which worketh repentance. “not to be repented of.”

H 4

Would

† Zech. xii. 10.

Would we *love* GOD? The oracles of heaven inform us, that we must see his love; his infinitely free, and infinitely tender love, towards us. His love, not imputing any sin to our souls, but laying all our iniquities upon his own SON. Then shall *we love him*, when we perceive and know, that *he has*, in this most divinely gracious manner, regarded—*loved*—blessed *us*.

Would we be *pure* in heart? The LORD “purifies the heart by faith *. Faith in CHRIST, as shedding his most precious blood, as giving his most glorious person, for our ransom. And, by his one oblation, “finishing “our transgression; making reconciliation for our iniquity;” yea, *perfecting us for ever*. Inasmuch, that
we

* Acts xv. 9.

we may boldly and assuredly say;
 “Through this grace of our LORD
JESUS CHRIST, we shall be saved.”
 He that hath this faith and this hope,
 “purifieth himself, even as he is
 “pure.”

Would we “renounce all ungodliness?” Would we “live soberly,
 “righteously, and godlily †?” By
 grace we must be enabled; even that
 grace, which brings salvation, a finished
 and free salvation to sinners. That
 grace, appearing in the heart and appropriated
 by faith, is the sure, the effectual means
 of true sanctification; the sure, the effectual
 motive to willing obedience.—Therefore our
 LORD says, “He that eateth me, even he
 “shall live by me ‡.” “He that eat-
 “eth me,” that receiveth my right-
 H 5 teousness.

† Tit. ii. 11, 12.

‡ John vi. 57.

teousness and redemption; that maketh a daily use of me and my benefits, for the refreshment and health of his soul; as people make a daily use of their necessary food, for the nourishment and support of their bodies. “Even he shall live by me;” he shall live to GOD in real holiness here, and live with GOD in everlasting glory hereafter.—This method will strengthen and prepare us, for discharging all the duties of a Christian life; as bread strengthens and prepares the labourer for dispatching the business of his toilsome calling. Whereas, without using this sovereign expedient, we shall be as incapable of exercising ourselves unto godliness; as the hireling, deprived of his usual meals, would be incapable of performing his daily task.

Upon the whole; we do not urge
you

you to make brick, without straw. We do not call upon you to arise and work, without shewing you, from whence your ability and vigour are to proceed.—Some, perhaps, might exhort you to all holy obedience; but, neglecting these most necessary directions, their exhortations would be comfortless and insignificant. Because, you might fetch a sigh and make answer; “All this we would gladly do, “but alas! we are not able.”—Whereas, here is grace sufficient for you in CHRIST. Whatever hinders you, CHRIST removes. Whatever you want, CHRIST bestows. “That, “being delivered from your enemies, “and from the hand of all that hate “you;” from the influence of all that embarrasses, and all that discourages you; “you may serve him, without” slavish or disquieting “fear, in holi-
 II. 6. “ness.

“ness and righteousness before him,
“all the days of your life †.”

Happy deliverance! Thrice happy conduct! But happier still the issue of all!—Which reminds me of my last enquiry; namely,

III. What will be the effect of this turning?—“He,” the wicked man, thus turned, “shall save his soul alive.”

He shall *save*.——Safety shall be his companion. Safety shall be his guard. Safety shall escort him through the dangers of life. All the days of his appointed time, “he shall dwell
“under the defence of the most
“HIGH, and abide under the shadow
“of the ALMIGHTY *.—Most desirable situation! especially, when judgments,

† Luke, i. 74, 75.

* Psal. xci. 1.

ments, desolating and destructive judgments, are abroad.—While the storm of calamity is gathering, or when the tempest of tribulation is raging, O! what a calm must it create in the heart, to have the eternal GOD for our refuge†! To say within ourselves; “The hand that is *stretched over the* “*sea, and shakes the kingdoms of the* “earth; the hand, that *rends the* “*mountains, and scatters the everlast-* “*ing hills* ||; that hand is my defence and my shield!”

Save his *soul*—It is not improbable, but his bodily welfare may be secured. GOD may set a mark upon his forehead, and command the sword of the destroying angel to pass over his house. But however this may be determined, his soul shall be safe. As
to

† Deut. xxxiii 27.

|| Hab. iii. 6.

to his spiritual welfare, he has a *writ of protection*, under the great seal of heaven. The LORD JESUS is his ever-faithful guardian, and “none shall pluck him out of the divine REDEEMER’s hand ¶.” The roaring lion may go about seeking to devour him : but he has a strong city, which the infernal adversary cannot storm ; he has an impregnable bulwark, which the powers of darkness cannot scale. Though he fall, the arm of CHRIST will raise him. Though he be defiled, the blood of CHRIST will cleanse him. Though he die, it will be no loss, but gain. HE that has the keys of the grave, will give commandment concerning his mouldering bones. HE that lives for evermore, will receive his departing soul.

—This

—This, perhaps, may be meant by that other emphatical word, *alive*.

He shall save his soul *alive*—He shall not barely be safe, but happy. He shall enjoy, what truly deserves the name of life. A man may escape from his enemy, by flying to a fortified castle. But in the castle, there may be drougt and famine. He may perish by these disasters; though preserved from the pursuing foe. It shall not be thus with the returning, believing, renewed sinner. He shall be saved with a complete, and everlasting salvation. He is a child of GOD, and an heir of glory. He shall rejoice in CHRIST JESUS here, and shall enter into the joy of his LORD hereafter.—When the earth is burnt up, he shall see it. When the heavens pass away, he shall stand with boldness. When all nature sinks into dissolution,
he

he shall not only survive, but enjoy the ruin. He shall leave a dissolving world, to possess a kingdom in heaven; to wear a crown of righteousness; and to be for ever with, for ever like his blessed and glorious LORD.

We have now shown—what the wicked man should turn *from*—what he should turn *to*—what will be the *effect* of this turning.—Give me leave to ask; Has the arm of the LORD been revealed? Are you impressed by the awful, or encouraged by the comfortable truths? If so, perhaps, you will be ready to say; “Will CHRIST
 “receive *me*? Will he make *me* a
 “partaker of these incomparable benefits? Shall such a one, who is so
 “very *unworthy*, find favour in his
 “fight?”

Yes; such a one may find favour. Any one, every one who comes, he will

will receive. He sends his ministers to *invite* you ; he sends his judgments to *compel* you ; he uses every expedient to *gain* you.—He bids earthquakes tear the foundations of nature, and turn mighty cities into ruinous heaps, that you may be built on that rock, which shall never be shaken. He calls the sword of war out of its scabbard, and commands it to be bathed in blood, that you may fly for safety to the Prince of Peace. While ruin and desolation, are pursuing their dreadful work all around, he throws open the doors of his grace and righteousness, and most compassionately cries ; “ Come, my people ; come, “ poor offenders ; enter into these “ chambers, and find rest.”

Is any of you still inclined to reply ? Will “ CHRIST indeed receive me, “ who am not only a sinner—but a
great

“ *great* sinner—a *long persisting* sinner
 “ —and now seem to come but at the
 “ *last hour* ; more like one driven by
 “ fear, than drawn by love ? ” —What
 thinkest thou ? Would the widow of
Nain, who went mourning after the
 corpse of her only son, almost incon-
 solable with her loss ; would she be
 unwilling to receive him, when our
 LORD restored him to life, and “ de-
 “ livered him to his mother * ? ”
 Would she need much importunity,
 and hardly be prevailed on to embrace
 her beloved, her lamented child ? Im-
 possible to suppose. Remember, what
 CHRIST has *done* for sinners ; what
 he has *suffered* for sinners ; how his
 bowels *yearn* over sinners ; and it will
 appear equally impossible, that he
 should reject any returning profligate.

Reject !

* Luke vii. 15.

Reject! No; the good father, aged and venerable as he was, hastened; yea, *ran* to meet the prodigal. He fell on his neck, and tenderly kissed the dissolute youth †. So, with such readiness and such compassion, will the everlasting FATHER receive you to his family, his favour, his love.—Nay more; he will receive you with *joy*. He is the good Shepherd. You are the lost sheep. He is come in his word to seek you. When you turn to him, he has found you. Then, says the scripture, the good shepherd goes home with his recovered sheep, *rejoicing* ‡. O let your minister, and (which is unspeakably more engaging) let the blessed JESUS have joy of you, my brethren. Even that JESUS, by whom sinners are “dearly beloved and
“longed

† Luke xv. 20.

‡ Luke xv. 5.

“longed for †;” who has no greater delight, than to save them from their iniquities, and number them among his children.

If you should answer—“This is a matter of the utmost importance. It lies at the very root of all my comfort. Let me hear it confirmed from our LORD’s own mouth. ‘I will hearken, what the LORD GOD will say concerning me *.’”

Hear then his own *promise*; the most precious promise that words can form, or fancy conceive; “Whosoever cometh to me,” for pardon, for justification, for holiness, “I will in no wise cast him out †—Whoever;” whether he be high or low, learned or illiterate; whether he be a servant or a master, a prince or a beggar;

† Phil. iv. 1.

* Psal. lxxxv. 8.

† John vi. 37.

gar; no one is excepted, no one shall be refused. *In no wise*; on no consideration of past transgressions; on no account of present depravity; on no fore-knowledge of future failings. Only let him come, “only let “him come,” and nothing shall debar him from the enjoyment of my benefits; nothing shall separate him from the endearments of my love.

Hear his kind *invitation*. “Return “unto me, for I have redeemed you †.” Ye, that have hitherto been strangers to seriousness, and always alienated from me; “turn unto me,” and I will not so much as upbraid you * with your folly.—Ye, that are now backsliders, and have for a season ungratefully departed from me; “turn unto “me,” and I will heal your backslidings;

† Isa. xlv. 22.

* James i. 5.

dings; my stripes shall make you whole.—Ye that have been slaves to vice; have sold yourselves to work wickedness; and are grown old in abominable practices; it is not too late even for you. *I have redeemed* even such as *you*.—I shake the pillars of nature, and rock the foundations of the world; “I clothe the heavens with blackness, and I make sackcloth their covering *.” Yet for such as you, “I gave my back to the smiters, “and hid not my face from shame and “spitting.” Yes, sinners; sinners of every kind; I bore the curse of the law, and died the death of the cross; on purpose that I might redeem such as you—Most amiable REDEEMER! Who would not listen to a call, so wonderfully endearing? Sinners, how
can

* Isa. l. 3, 6.

can you withstand a motive, so sweetly contraining?

Hear his solemn oath; “As I live, “faith the LORD GOD, I have no “pleasure in the death of the wicked, “but that the wicked turn from his “way and live. Turn ye, turn ye “from your evil ways; for why will “ye die, O house of *Israel*†?” Was there ever any declaration so charming? Or any address so affectionate? —See! how the high and lofty ONE condescends! He commands in heaven, on earth, through hell; yet, more like a suppliant than a sovereign, he vouchsafes to solicit and beseech you. From the habitation of his glory he cries; *Turn ye*, poor perishing creatures,—Again he cries; *Turn ye*, to your GOD and SAVIOUR. That
ye

† Ezek. xxiii. 11.

ye may be delivered from all your transgressions, and iniquity may not be your ruin.—To take away all your reluctance, he pleads, he expostulates; “Why will ye die?” Why will ye destroy yourselves, and be undone for ever?—That you may have no doubt of a free pardon and a favourable reception, *he swears*; swears by himself; by his own life and immortal perfections; that he “has no pleasure in your death,” but shall rejoice, infinitely rejoice in your recovery and salvation.

Here then you have the *promise*, the *invitation*, the *vow* of the LORD. Can there be greater encouragement? Will not this threefold cord draw you?—Should you say; “I cannot turn. I am tied and bound with “the chains of my corruptions. O! “that CHRIST”—Fear not. He will, he will. He that sends his minister

nister to give you this exhortation; he has sent his SPIRIT to work this desire in your soul; he that spilt his blood to obtain all blessings for you; he will put forth his strength, and turn you to himself. He stretched forth his hand, and saved Peter from sinking in the tempestuous sea. What he did to him, is a pattern and a pledge of what he will do for you.—Only continue to seek his face. Let your heart talk of him. Set his unbounded goodness and almighty power before your eyes. Meditate on his infinite propitiation and incomprehensible merits. Consider his everlasting righteousness and never-ceasing intercession. Looking upon all these as your own. To look upon them as *your own*, you have a *warrant*; you have a *command*.—And if CHRIST has done so great things for you, you

I

may

may assuredly believe, that, in his due time, in his wise manner, he will "bring you spiritual health and cure." He will carry on what he has begun, and enable you to grow in grace. He will comfort your hearts, and establish you in every good work.

Shall I proceed?—I have already been copious; perhaps, somewhat tedious. Yet you will bear with me, on this distinguished and solemn occasion. Yes, you will bear with me a little longer. For I am loth, very loth to dismiss you, without persuading. Persuading! Alas, I cannot. "GOD, and none but GOD, can "persuade Japheth *." However, as an instrument in his all-powerful hand, let me address you once again.

I observe several persons here, on
this

* Gen. ix. 27.

this day of humiliation, who very rarely attend the public worship.—Why, my friends, why do you wrong your own souls? Why do you withdraw yourselves from the preaching of the gospel? Know ye not, that JESUS *passeth by* † in the way of his ordinances? Here you may, like *Bar-timeus* of old, approach the Son of *David*, and obtain recovery of your sight. Here you may obtain faith and holiness. Faith cometh by hearing, and holiness by the word of GOD. And are these blessings worth your attendance? Can you live happily without them? Can you die comfortably without them? Or can you, without them, be prepared to meet your GOD, when he cometh to judge the world?—Why should you forsake

I 2

the

† Matt. xx. 30.

the assembling yourselves together? Do you hear terrifying or distressing doctrines, in this place? Is not this the house of praise, as well as of prayer? Does not the *joyful sound* echo under these roofs? Is not CHRIST set forth crucified before your eyes? Crucified for such offenders as you! Crucified, that such offenders as you, may be pardoned; may be accepted; may be glorified? And will you despise such a divinely compassionate SAVIOUR? Will you refuse such astonishingly rich mercies? O! that hereafter you may “be glad, when they “say unto you, Let us go into the “courts of the LORD*.

Should my wishes prove vain, I have at least delivered my message. If you perish through obstinacy and
unbelief,

* Psal. cxxii. 1.

unbelief, I am clear from your blood. I call heaven and earth to witness, you have been *warned*; you have been *instructed*; you have been *exhorted*. You cannot say, You perish for lack of knowledge. For life and salvation have been set before you; have been brought to your very door; and you are importuned to lay hold of them. You will therefore be without excuse, and have no cloke for your guilt.

But why should I leave you, with such melancholy apprehensions. Let me hope better things of you. Let me hope, that you will not disregard *these* admonitions; however you may have disregarded *too many* exhortations of this kind. This is a remarkable day. O! that it may be memorable, on account of your turning to GOD. Let this be its distinction, through all

your future life. Let this be its distinction, through all the ages of eternity. That you may say—when death summons you into the invisible state; when the trump of GOD calls you to the great tribunal: when you mingle with saints and angels, in the kingdom of heaven—“ Blessed be
 “ GOD for that solemn day, and its
 “ sacred exercises! That was the day
 “ of my better birth. Then I began
 “ to consider. Then I began to pray.
 “ Then I began to see my undone
 “ condition, and my extreme need of
 “ a SAVIOUR. Then too I saw
 “ JESUS, giving himself a sacrifice
 “ for my sins, and redeeming me to
 “ GOD with his blood.”—Happy!
 Thrice happy! Inexpressibly happy
 day! if *thus*, if *thus* improved! You
 have, I presume, abstained from your
 usual food; as you have been joining
 in

in confession, supplication, and prayer. This is well done. But this is only half; rather it is, by infinite degrees, the smallest part of your duty. It is not said, When the wicked man abstaineth from his usual food, but “When he turneth from his wickedness.” It is not said, When he joins in public confession to GOD, but when “he doth that which is lawful and right.” THEN he shall *save*—He shall save *his soul*—He shall save his soul *alive*. O that all, from the king on the throne, to the labourer in the barn; from the highest nobleman, to the meanest tradesman; that all might now be inclined, now be enabled, to turn unto the SAVIOUR of the world. In him millions, unnumbered millions of wretched sinners, have found recovery and liberty. *Recovery* from the death, and *liberty* from the bondage.

bondage of sin. *And* (blessed be his unbounded grace) *yet there is room.*

Then the national fast would be a *national blessing*. Whereas, without this all-important turning to the adorable SAVIOUR, What will the formalities of our devotion signify? They will be a mere lip-labour; a religious trifling. Nay; they will be a solemn mockery of the ALMIGHTY, and provoke his abhorrence.—Does not JEHOVAH himself speak to the same purpose? “Is it such a fast that I
“ have chosen? A day for a man to
“ afflict his soul? Is it to bow down
“ his head as a bulrush, and to spread
“ sackcloth and ashes under him?”
To discontinue your ordinary business, and refrain from a meal’s meat? To make a little doleful lamentation, and put up a few petitions extorted by
fear?

fear? "Will you call this a fast," saith the high and holy One, with an air of sovereign contempt! "This an acceptable day to the LORD?" No, verily; it is the most odious hypocrisy. Like crying, Hail Master, with the tongue; while treachery and enmity fill the heart. *Unless* you turn to *CHRIST*, that you may be washed; that you may be justified; that you may be sanctified. That, having remission of sins through his blood, and peace of conscience through his grace, you may feel the bands of wickedness loosed, and may become the willing servants of righteousness.

When this is done, we answer the end of our sacred assembly, and the design of GOD's alarming visitations. When this is done, we may reasonably hope—that as individuals, our "light

“and our health shall spring forth
 “speedily”—that as a community,
 “the favour of GOD shall go before
 “us, and the glory of the LORD
 “shall be our reward *.”

Then may we look *around* on our
 most enraged enemies, and say with
 the psalmist; “Though an host of
 “men should encamp against me, yet
 “shall not my heart be afraid †.”—
 Then may we look *backward* to the
 late desolating earthquake, and say
 with the believers of old; “God is
 “our refuge and strength; therefore
 “will we not fear, though the earth
 “be removed, and though the moun-
 “tains be carried into the midst of the
 “sea ‡.—Then may we look *forward*
 to an incomparably more dreadful
 scene, even to the righteous JUDGE,
 and

* Isa. lviii. 8. † Psal. xxvii. 3. ‡ Psal. xli. 1. 2.

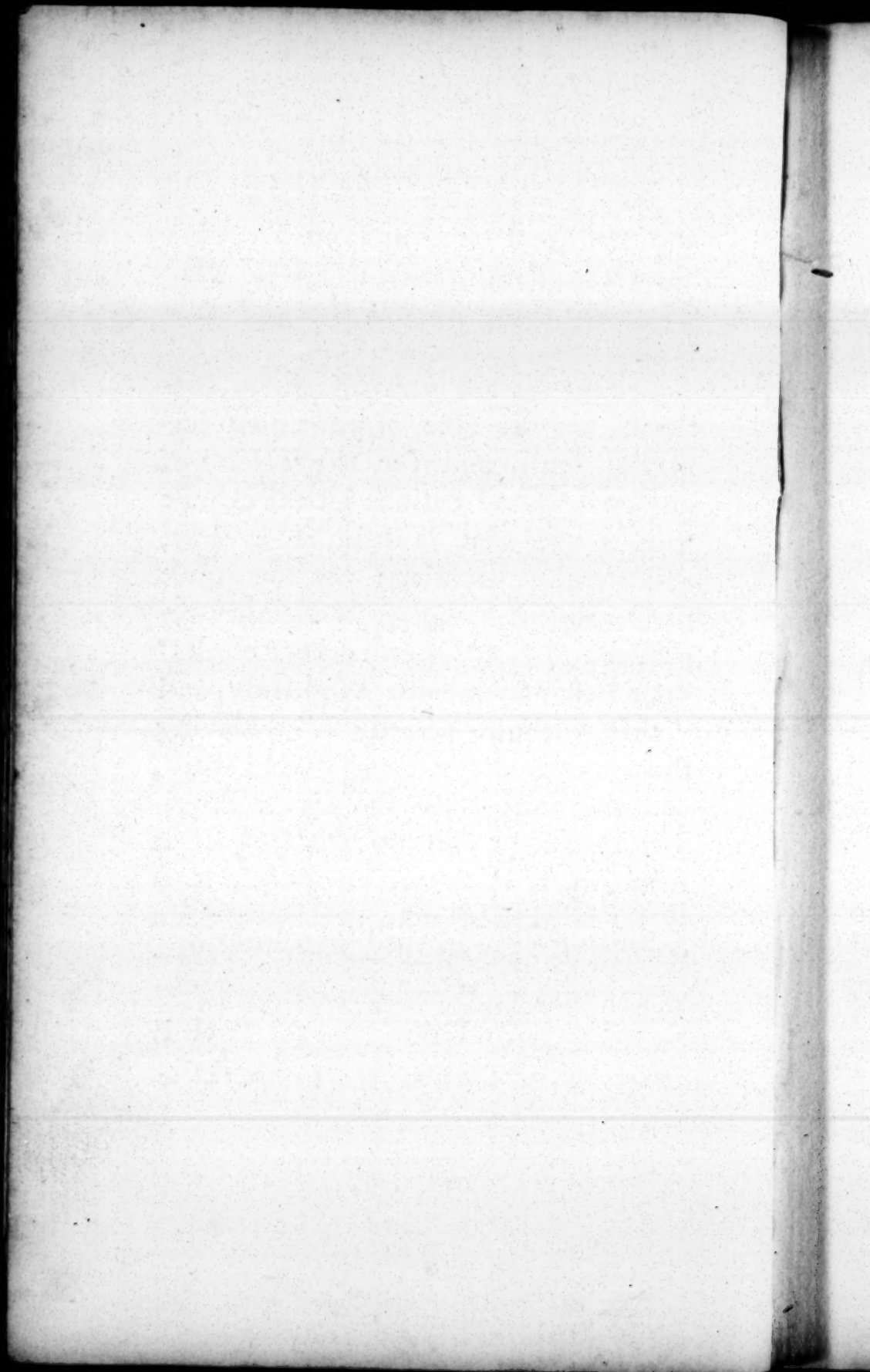
and the great tribunal, and say with the triumphant apostle ; “ Who shall lay any thing to our charge ? It is GOD that justifieth †.”

Let me intreat you therefore, brethren, for the sake of your own immortal souls, and for the welfare of our endangered nation ; let me charge you, by all that is desirable in time, and awful in eternity ; not to neglect these counsels. Being so solemnly reformed, if you “ harden your neck,” your destruction cometh suddenly, and “ that without remedy ‡.” Having these warnings from the divine word, and warnings from the divine Providence, “ if ye still do wickedly ;” it is not man, it is not an angel, it is GOD HIMSELF who declares ; “ Ye shall be consumed”—even “ ye”—your country, “ and your king §.”

I 6

T H E

† Rom. viii. 33. ‡ Prov. xxix. 1. § 1 Sam. x xii. 25.



THE
CROSS OF CHRIST
THE
CHRISTIAN'S GLORY.

A
VISITATION-SERMON.

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A

VISITATION SERMON.

GAL. vi. 14.

*God forbid, that I should glory, save in
the cross of our LORD JESUS
CHRIST.*

THE cross of *CHRIST*, was
the favourite topick of St.
Paul's contemplation.—The
cross of *CHRIST*, was the
chosen subject of his sermons, and
the grand theme of his writings.—At
all

all times, and in every capacity he professed, he avowed, he *gloried* in the cross of *CHRIST*—Nay, what is very remarkable, he gloried in *nothing* else—And, what is still more observable, he *abhorred* the thought of glorying in any thing else. He speaks of such a practice, in the language of detestation and dread; accounting it a high degree, both of folly and of wickedness: “God forbid, that I should glory, save in the cross of our “LORD JESUS CHRIST.”

It may, therefore, be an employ worthy of our present attention, to enquire into the *nature*, the *reasonableness*, and the *wisdom*, of this resolution. All which, I hope, will appear, if we consider,

I. In what the apostle would *not* glory.

II. In

II. In what he *did* glory.

III. What *reason* he had, to glory in the cross of *CHRIST*.

These points being briefly dispatched, I shall beg leave to add a word of *application*: suggested by the tenour of the discourse, and adapted to the circumstances of my several hearers. And may that adorable JESUS, who has exchanged his cross for an heavenly crown, accompany all with his *divine blessing*!

Let us then enquire,

I. In what the apostle did *not* glory?
—Not in the *greatness* of his *learning*, as a scholar. He was brought up at the feet of *Gamaliel*; educated by the most famous tutor of the age. Nor was his genius, or his industry, inferior

rior to the other advantages of his education. Yet all these advantages, with their correspondent acquisitions, he accounted no better than pompous ignorance, or refined folly.

Not in the *strictness* of his *life*, as a *Jew*.—In this respect, he profited above his equals: “Was taught according to the perfect manner of the law of the fathers *; after the straightest sect of their religion he lived a Pharisee †:” Was zealous, exceedingly zealous, of the whole ceremonial law, and of all the traditional constitutions. Which accomplishments must finish his character among his countrymen; must open his way to some of the first honours of the nation; and gave him a name among those worthies, who were reputed *the excellent of the earth*. But what others counted

* Acts xxii. 3.

† Acts xxvi. 5,

counted gain, this *he* counted loss for *CHRIST*.

Not in the *eminency* of his *gifts*, nor in the *extent* of his *usefulness*, as a Christian minister.—He had been caught up into the third heaven; had heard the words of GOD, and seen the vision of the Almighty; had wrought all manner of wonders, and signs, and mighty deeds.—What was still more valuable, he had planted churches, and converted souls. His labours were gone out into all lands, and his words into the ends of the earth.—Yet all these acquirements, before the infinite GOD, were *defective*: All these performances, in point of justification, were *insufficient*. Therefore, in *none* of these he gloried.—Which reminds me of the second inquiry.

II. In what the apostle *did* glory?
—He

—He gloried in a cross. Strange! what so *scandalous* as a cross? On a cross rebellious slaves were executed. The cross was *execrable* among men, and *accursed* even by GOD *. Yet the apostle glories in the cross.—Crucifixion not being used among us, the expression does not sound so *harsh*; neither is the idea so *horrid*. But to the ear of a *Galatian*, it conveyed much the same meaning, as if the apostle had gloried in a halter; gloried in the gallows; gloried in a gibbet †.

“Stupid

* Gal. iii. 13.

† Some persons, I am informed, were disgusted at these words, *Halter, Gallows, Gibbet*. They are so horridly contemptible!—To whom I would reply; That the cross, in point of ignominy and torment, included *all this* and *more*. Unless the *English* reader forms to himself some such image, he will never be able to apprehend the scandalous nature, and shocking circumstances, of his divine Master's death.

The words, I must confess, were *diversified*, and the sentiment was *reiterated*, on purpose to affect the mind with this
astounding

“ Stupid creature! (*perhaps some may*
 “ *reply*) To undervalue the most sub-
 “ stantial endowments, and glory in
 “ infamy itself!”—But stop a mo-
 ment, and hear the apostle farther.
 He glories in the cross of *CHRIST*;
 that illustrious person, who was *an-*
ointed to be the all-instructing prophet,
 the all-atoning priest, and the all-con-
 quering king of the church.—In the
 cross of *CHRIST JESUS*; who by the
 discharge of all those important offices,
 should *save* his people from the do-
 minion of sin, and from the damnation
 of

astounding truth. Neither can I prevail upon myself to ex-
 punge the expressions; unless I could substitute others of a
 more ignominious and execrable import. Only I would
 beg of the serious reader, to spend a moment in the follow-
 ing reflection:—“ Is it so? That a *polite* and *delicate* ear,
 “ can hardly endure so much as the *sound* of the words? How
 “ amazing then was the condescension! How charming and
 “ adorable the goodness of GOD’s *illustrious Son*; to bear
 “ all that is signified by these intolerable vile terms! Bear it
 “ *willingly*, bear it *cheerfully*, for us men, and our salvation!”

of hell.—In the cross of *CHRIST JESUS*, OUR LORD; and not ours only, but LORD of all. Who doeth according to his will, in the army of heaven, and among the inhabitants of the earth *. “Who hath on his vesture, and on his thigh, a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS †.”

And is it possible for any human heart, to contemplate the cross of so *divine* a being, and not to glory? Is it possible to say, “Angels, he rules over” you; “but he died on a cross for” me; and not exult in such transporting beneficence?—This will be more evident, if we examine,

III. What *reason* the apostle had, to glory in the cross of CHRIST.—The cross,

* Dan. iv. 35.

† Rev. xix. 16.

cross, though in itself an ignominious tree, yet being the cross of CHRIST, is infinitely ennobled. It becomes the *tree of life*. It bears the divinest fruit. Its clusters are all *spiritually* and *heavenly* blessings. Two or three of those clusters, you will permit me to select; and may the GOD of all mercy make them better than a feast, to every humble soul!

One blessing is the *pardon* of *sin*. The pardon of *all* sin, original and actual: Sin that is remembered, and sin that is forgotten: Sin, however circumstanced, or however aggravated. The pardon of all was purchased by the death of CHRIST—completely purchased;—so that, against the true believer, sin shall never rise up in judgment; “shall not so much as be mentioned unto him *;” shall be done away,

* Ezek. xviii. 22.

away, as though it had never been. For thus saith the ambassador of the Prince of peace; "Be it known unto you, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins; and by him all that believe are justified from all things †."—Oh my soul! My guilty soul! What are all the kingdoms of the world, and the glories of them, compared to this ineffable blessing! Yet this is but one among a multitude.

Another benefit, accruing from the cross of *CHRIST*, is "reconciliation with GOD.—When we were enemies, we were reconciled to GOD, by the death of his Son *." Not pardoned only but accepted; from a state of *enmity*, restored to a state of *favour*; even that "favour, which is better

† Acts-xiii, 38.

* Rom. v. 10.

“better than life †.”—A privilege of such superlative excellency, that it was celebrated in the hymns of angels. When the heavenly host uttered a song, *this* was the subject of their harmonious joy: “Glory be to GOD in the highest; and on earth peace; good-will towards men †.” “By the birth of this wonderful child, and the death he shall sustain, peace is made between heaven and earth. And not *peace* only, but a divine ||
K “friendship

† Psal. lxiii. 4.

‡ Luke ii 14.

¶ There seems to be a beautiful *gradation*, in this angelic hymn. *Good-will* is more expressive, and denotes a richer blessing than *peace*.—The original *Eudoxia*, is a word of the most amiable and noble meaning. It signifies a very *high esteem*, and a very *tender benevolence*. By a word of the same import, the same Almighty FATHER expresses his infinite satisfaction, in the person and undertaking of his beloved SON. *Matth.* iii. 17.

Would my reader have the liveliest paraphrase on this passage? Or see the actings of this divine complacency, described with inimitable delicacy? Let him attend to the prophet
Zephaniah :

“*friendship* commences. GOD re-
 “gards the poor apostate race of men,
 “not only without indignation, but
 “with complacency and delight. *He*
 “*rejoices over them to do them good* *.”

Another benefit is *holiness*: Or, if you please, the true, the Christian morality.—Let none think, the believer in JESUS disparages *true morality*. True morality is the image of the blessed GOD. It is most charmingly delineated, throughout the whole Bible. It is the beginning of heaven in the human soul. And its proper origin is from the cross of our divine MASTER.—For through the merits of his death, sinners are made
 partakers

Zephaniah: The LORD thy GOD, in the midst of thee, is mighty. He will save: He will rejoice over thee with joy. He will rest in his love: He will joy over thee with singing, chap. iii. 17.

* Deut. xxviii.

partakers of the HOLY SPIRIT ; who writes upon their hearts, and makes legible in their conversation, what was anciently written upon the mitre of the high-priest, HOLINESS TO THE LORD—And oh ! what a *motive* is the cross of CHRIST, to the exercise of every virtue ! *He died ; my LORD, my JUDGE, my KING, died ; to redeem me from all iniquity, and make me zealous of good works.* How powerfully, far beyond any *naked instructions, or abstract reasonings*, do such considerations invite us—urge us—constrain us †, to *renounce* all ungodliness, and *adorn* the gospel of GOD our SAVIOUR !

K 2

Another

† 2 Cor. v. 14.

Religion ! Thou the soul of happiness :
 And, groaning *Calvary*, of thee ! *There* shine
 The noblest truths, *there*, strongest motives sing !
 There, sacred violence assaults the soul ;
 There, nothing but *compulsion* is forborne.

Night-Thoughts, No. IV.

Another blessing is, *victory over death*.—This also is the fruit on that once detested, but now ever beloved, tree. For, thus it is written; “That
 “ through death, he might destroy him
 “ who had the power of death; that is,
 “ the devil; and deliver them who,
 “ through fear of death, were all
 “ their life-time subject to bondage *.” The devil is said to have the power of death; because, by tempting, too successfully, our first parents, he *brought* death into the world; because by tempting their posterity to sin, and too often prevailing, he *arrays* death in horror; he *arms* death with its sting. But CHRIST, by expiating our guilt has disarmed this last enemy; has taken away its sting; and made it not loss,
 but

* Heb. ii, 14, 15.

but *gain to die* †.—The *gay*, and the *healthy*, know not how to form an estimate of this deliverance. Nor can any words of mine describe it, with proper energy. Go to *dying* beds; *there* you will learn its true worth. Ask some *agonizing* friend; he, and he alone, can tell you, what a blessing it is, to have the king of terrors converted into a messenger of peace.

One blessing more I would mention, and earnestly wish it, in due time, to all my hearers; “an entrance into heaven.” This too is the produce of our Redeemer’s cross.—St. *John* saw a bright assembly of happy beings, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands; rejoicing before the throne of GOD. *These*, said one of the venerable el-

K 3

ders,

† Phil. i. 21.

ders, “are they who came out of
 “great tribulation, and have washed
 “their robes, and made them white
 “in the blood of the lamb. THERE-
 “FORE are they before the throne †.
 “—They came out of great tribula-
 “tion:” They suffered, it is probable,
 in the service of CHRIST. Perhaps,
 they laid down their lives for his sake.
 But *this* was not their passport into
 the regions of bliss.—“They washed
 “their robes in the blood of the
 “LAMB;” They had applied to their
 own souls, the merits and atonement
 of the crucified JESUS. By *this*
 means, they were presented without
 spot and blameless. On this account,
 they were admitted to “see the King
 “of heaven in his beauty †;” and to
 be ever, ever with the LORD.

Since

‡ Rev. vii. 9. 14, 15.

† M. xxxiii. 17.

Since then the cross of *CHRIST*, was *demonstrative* of such stupendous love; since it is *productive* of *benefits*, innumerable, invaluable, and eternal; was there not a *cause*, for the apostle to glory on this behalf?—Nay, might not the very stones have cried out, to reproach him with *insensibility* and *ingratitude*, if he had neglected to glory in the cross of *CHRIST*?—And since this love was shewed, these benefits were procured; not for *him* only, but for *us*, and for all generations; does not this afford me an opportunity of *applying* the doctrine to each particular hearer?

1. Let me address, or rather let me congratulate, my “brethren in the “ministry.”—Though you cannot controul the laws of nature; though you cannot see into the secrets of fu-

K 4.

turity;

turity; you have the same cause of glorying, with the very chieft of the apostles. A cause of glorying, which that holy man of GOD esteemed, far above all such miraculous abilities. You have the cross of *CHRIST*,

For your *study*, as *men*:

For your *hope*, as *Christians*:

For your *preaching*, as *ministers*.

For your *study*, as *men*. Here, the *reasoning* faculties may exert themselves, with everlasting improvement, and everlasting delight.—Here, we contemplate the wonders, the unparalleled wonders, of a GOD made *man*: Dying, as a pattern of patience; as a martyr for truth; as an all-perfect sacrifice for sin.—Here, the LORD JEHOVAH hath fully granted, what
his

his servant *Moses* † so earnestly requested : He hath made *all his glory* to pass, before the astonished eyes of angels, and of men.—Here, *justice* has set her most awful terrors in array ; even while *goodness* appears, with inexpressible liveliness, and the most attractive beauty. Here, *truth*, more unshaken than a rock, takes her immoveable stand ; and *mercy*, tenderer than the mother's tear, yearns with bowels of everlasting pity.—In a word ; the cross of CHRIST is a conspicuous theatre, on which *all* the divine perfections unite and harmonize, and shine forth with transcendent lustre.

As *Christians*, we have, in the cross of CHRIST, the *richest provision* for our own spiritual wants. This is a

K 5 foundation.

† Exod. xxxiii 18.

foundation of the sublimest *hope*, and a fountain of the most exuberant *joy*. This affords matter for the deepest *humility*, and yields fuel for the most flaming *love*. Faith in our crucified *JESUS*, is an ever-active principle of the most chearful and exact *obedience*: is an ample and inexhaustible magazine, from which we may fetch arms to conquer; absolutely conquer, the allurements of the world, the solicitations of the flesh, and the temptations of the devil.—By this, a way is opened for us into *the Holy of Holies*; and what may we not venture to ask, what may we not expect to receive, who have the blood of the everlasting covenant to plead, in all our approaches to the throne of grace?—Having, therefore, *such* an HIGH-PRIEST; having in his cross, *unsearchable* riches; who shall make our glory-
ing

ing void? What shall hinder us from rejoicing and saying? "Blessed be GOD, for these opening beauties of spring! Blessed be GOD, for the expected fruits of autumn! Blessed be GOD, for ten thousand thousand gifts of his indulgent Providence! But *above all*, blessed be GOD, for the cross of *CHRIST*!"

As *Ministers* of the gospel, we are not left to set before our hearers, a system of *refined heathenism*; or to entertain them with *cold, spiritless* lectures of virtue. No; we have the *infinitely tender* love, the *immensely free* grace, of the bleeding dying IMMANUEL, to display—to improve—to enforce. And is there a topic, in the whole compass of *oratory*; is there an argument, amidst all the stores of *reason*; so admirably calculated to touch the *finest* movements of the soul? To

strike all the *inmost springs* of action, with the most persuasive, the most commanding energy?—Would we alarm the *supine*, or intimidate the *presumptuous*? We may call them to behold GOD's own SON, weltering in blood; GOD's own SON, transfixed with the arrows of justice. We may bid them consider; if judgment begins with the immaculate Mediator, where shall the irreclaimable sinner appear? How will he *escape* the stroke, how *bear* the weight, of GOD's everlasting vengeance?—Would we comfort the *distressed*? We may point them to an atonement, whose merits are infinite, and able to save to *the very uttermost* *. We may lead them to a righteousness, whose efficacy is unbounded, and sufficient to justify the *ungodly*. And what *balm* can be so sovereign,

* Heb. vii. 25.

sovereign, for a wounded conscience?
—Are we to support the *weak*, and
animate the *doubting*? Here, we may
shew them promises; free promises †;
exceeding great and precious promises;
ratified by the oath of JEHOVAH,
and sealed by the blood of his Son.
And what *cordials* can be so restorative,
to the drooping Christian?

In short, the doctrine of the cross,
is suited to answer all the *great ends* of
our ministry, and promote all the
truly *valuable interests* of our people.
By this, the HOLY SPIRIT delights
to work. And this, “O Satan, shall
“be thy plague:” This, O Sin, “shall
“be thy destruction ‡.”—However,
therefore,

† To man the bleeding cross has promis'd all;
The bleeding cross has sworn eternal grace;
Who gave his life, what grace will he deny?

Night Thoughts, No. IV.

‡ Hof. xiii. 14.

therefore, the cross might be to the *Jews* a stumbling-block, and to the *Greeks* foolishness; GOD forbid, that we should glory in any thing else!—Let this be the *Alpha* and *Omega*, the beginning and ending *, of all our *public* ministrations.—Let me leave a favour of this knowledge, which is far better than precious ointment, in every *private* company.—Let it appear from all our conversation; That the *affections* of our heart, and the *labours* of our life, are devoted, wholly devoted,

* The author, who could write the *spirited* and *weighty* lines which follow, must doubtless have this conviction deep on his heart.

-----Thou, my *All* !

My theme ! my inspiration ! and my crown !

My strength in age ! my rise in low estate !

My soul's ambition, pleasure, wealth !—My world !

My light in darkness ! and my life in death !

My boast through time ! bliss through eternity !

My *sacrifice* ! my *God* !—What things are these !

Night Thoughts, No. IV.

devoted, to our adored REDEEMER's cross.—*Happy* the *people*, who are under the care of such ministers! and *blessed* the *ministers*, who walk according to this rule!

2. Let me exhort all *true believers*. Those, who are *vile* in their own eyes, and to whom *CHRIST* alone is *precious*.—Remember, brethren, what is written in the prophet: it is a description of your state: It is a description for your conduct. “In the” LORD, the LORD JESUS CHRIST, “shall all the seed of Israel be justified, and “in *HIM* shall they glory †.”

Let none say, that religion is a *gloomy* or *uncomfortable* state: I call upon you, this day to rejoice ‡:—Let
none

† Is. xiv, 25.

‡ 'Tis this makes *Christian triumph* a command:

'Tis this makes joy a *duty* to the wise.

none say that religion is a *mean* or *despicable* thing: I call upon you this day, to *glory*. And have the *divine* authority for both *.—You will dishonour the blessed *JESUS*; you will disparage his surpassing excellency; if you do not *confide* in him, and make your *boast* of him. *CHRIST* is King of heaven; *CHRIST* is Judge of the world; *CHRIST* is GOD over all. And of *such* a SAVIOUR shall we not glory? Yes, verily: And in all circumstances, and on every occasion.

Amidst your manifold *infirmities*, glory in *CHRIST*. For, though he was crucified in weakness, he hath all power, in heaven and earth. And it is written before him; it is one of his immutable

* *Καυχασομαι*, the word in our text, denotes the act of *rejoicing*, as well as of *glorying*. Thus it is translated, *Rom. v. 11*. And indeed this it always implies.—See *Psal. v. 11*, *Psal. cxlix. 5*. *Sept. Transl.*

immutable decrees; "sin shall not
 "have dominion over you †.—A-
 midst your various *failings*, glory in
CHRIST. For, his righteousness co-
 vers all your imperfections; his righ-
 teousness secures you from wrath and
 condemnation; and, though deficient
 in yourselves, you are complete in
 him ‡.—Under the pressure of *tribula-*
tions, lift up your heads, and glory
 in the cross. Because, the Captain of
 your salvation was made perfect thro'
 sufferings. If you suffer with him,
 you shall also reign with him. And
 the sufferings of this present time, are
 not worthy to be compared with the
 happiness, which *CHRIST* hath pur-
 chased with his agonies, and will
 quickly bestow on his people.—When
Death approaches; death that cuts off
 the

† Rom. vi. 14.

‡ Coloss. ii. 17.

the spirit of princes, and is terrible among the kings of the earth; do you still glory in the cross. Adhering to this banner, you may boldly and triumphantly say; "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory *?"—When that great, *tremendous day* shall come, which puts an end to time and terrestrial things; when that awful, that *majestic voice* is heard, which commands all the race of *Adam* to appear at the bar; *then*, my dear

* 1 Cor. xv. 55. This is evidently the language of a conqueror, addressed to some *formidable*, but *vanquished* enemy.—We shall form no improper idea of this significant and beautiful passage; if we picture to ourselves the good apostle, in the attitude of those *Hebrew* captains, who set their feet on the necks of the five *Canaanitish* kings, *Josh. x. 25*. If we suppose him, in such a posture, to utter this animated exclamation, or rather this *pious insult*, over the two grand, but prostrate adversaries of mankind; "O Death! Where is now thy sting? Since CHRIST has expiated sin, by the sacrifice of himself? O Grave! Where is now thy victory? Since CHRIST is both risen himself, and has ascended to his people a joyful resurrection?"

dear brethren in *CHRIST*, *then* also shall *you* glory in the cross, when others, in an agony of terror, call upon rocks to fall upon them, and mountains to overwhelm them; *This* shall be *your* sedate appeal; rather, *this* shall be your heroic challenge:

“Who shall lay any thing to the charge of GOD’s elect? It is GOD that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is CHRIST that died *.”—Then shall you enter the harbour of eternal rest, not like a shipwrecked mariner, cleaving to some broken plank, and hardly escaping the raging waves; but like some stately vessel, with all her sails expanded, and riding before a prosperous gale †.

3. Let

* Rom. viii. 33. 34.

† St. Peter’s expression, Εισεοδες πλυσινς επιχορηγηθισται, is perhaps too nervous, and too noble, to admit of an adequate translation: The above comparison is, I think, a pertinent

3. Let me caution the *self-righteous*. Those, who more frequently think of *their own* piety, than of *CHRIST's* obedience; are more apt to cry out with the *Pharisee*, "I am no extortioner, no adulterer;" than to confess with the *publican*, "GOD be merciful to me a sinner."—What shall I say to these persons? Let me not be thought censorious, when my only aim is to be faithful. Beware, I beseech you, beware, lest you build for eternity, not on a rock, but on the sand. However you may appear in *your own* sight; before the *adorable* majesty of the everlasting GOD, before the *consummate* perfection of his holy law, you are less than nothing; you are worse than nothing.

pertinent illustration of the delicate sentiment, and the delightful doctrine. A ship wafted into the port, under the full influence of wind and tide, seems to afford the finest representation of a *large*, a *rich*, an *abundant* entrance.
2 Pet. i. 11.

nothing. You are, indeed you are, deficiency and sin. Renounce, therefore, renounce all dependence on self. Trust no longer in a refuge of lies: lest all your admired attainments, at the day of final retribution, be like *straw*, and *hay*, and *stubble*, in *Nebuchadnezzar's* burning fiery furnace.—Imitate the blessed penman of my text. Are you blameless in your external carriage? So was he. Are you exemplary in many points? So was he. Yet all this righteousness he “ac-
 “counted but dung, for the excellency of the knowledge of CHRIST
 “JESUS his LORD *.”—Be this your pattern. Write *emptiness* upon your own duties; *emptiness* upon your own works; and you shall be filled with all the *fulness* of GOD your SAVIOUR. Every other cause of glory-
 ing

* Phil. iii. 9.

ing will be like the morning-cloud,
or the early dew, which *passeth away* †.
But this cause of glorying, will “stand
“fast for ever more as the moon,”
and “as the faithful witness in hea-
“ven ‡.”

Can I conclude, without adding a
word of admonition to the *wicked*?
Those I mean, who are enemies to
the cross of CHRIST; who mind
earthly things; but neither hunger
nor thirst after righteousness.—My
soul remembers the wormwood and
the gall of such a state; and cannot
but tenderly pity these unhappy peo-
ple.—Alas! my friends, what have
you to glory in? The devil and his an-
gels expect, ere long, to glory in your
destruction. Those malignant fiends
are eying you as their prey, and are
impatient

† Hof. vi. 4.

‡ Psal lxxxix. 36.

impatient to begin your torment. Great, inexpressibly great, is your danger. The LORD Almighty open your eyes to discern it!—Nevertheless, your case is not desperate. You may *yet* be *delivered*, “as a bird out of the snare of the fowler.” Look unto the crucified JESUS. *Why* does he hang on that bloody tree? *Why* are his hands pierced with iron? *Why* is his body racked with pain? *Why* his heart torn with anguish? It is for *you*, sinners, for *you*. That blood is poured out, to cleanse *you* from guilt. Those wounds are sustained, to heal *your* consciences. That anguish is endured, to obtain rest for *your* souls.—In that mangled body “dwells all the fulness of the Godhead †.” Great, beyond imagination great, is the merit of those sufferings.

† Coloss. ii. 9.

sufferings. Why then, O! why will you die? Why will you perish for ever; who have an *all-sufficient* propitiation in the cross of *CHRIST*? Fly to this sanctuary. Fly, before it be too late. Fly, without a moment's delay. 'Tis an *invulnerable* sanctuary. None ever perished, that fled by faith to the compassionate, the *divinely compassionate* Redeemer.—His death shall be a full satisfaction for your iniquities. A sense of his immensely rich goodness shall *win* your affections; shall incline (what all the threatenings of damnation could never effect), shall incline you, to *loath* your sins, and to *love* his service; shall smoothe your path, and expedite your progress to the regions of immortal honour and joy.

Having now, with great plainness of speech, addressed my *brethren* in
the

the *ministry*; having exhorted *believers*; cautioned the *self-righteous*; and warned the wicked; let me commend the whole to your *serious recollection*, and to GOD's *gracious benediction*.—And, “O LORD most holy! “O GOD most mighty! O holy and “merciful SAVIOUR! by thine agony and bloody sweat—by thy “*cross* and *passion*”—let not the word, now spoken, be in vain in the LORD! *Amen*, and *Amen*.

L

The

The Ministry of Reconciliation: Representing the benign Tendency of the Gospel; and that it is the friendly Office of Ministers, as the Ambassadors of Christ, to press Men with all imaginable Tenderneſs, Humility, and Earnestneſs to accept the Treaty of Reconciliation as eſtabliſhed in him, and urged by him, while on Earth:

A

S E R M O N

Preached at the Parish-Church of

All-Saints in NORTHAMPTON.

We are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech you by us : We pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled unto God. 2 Cor. v, 20.

[illegible]

A D V E R T I S E M E N T.

AS this is a posthumous piece, it may be necessary to observe for the satisfaction of the public, that Mr. *Hervey* was many years ago solicited to print this sermon by several who heard it; but as he was a man of great modesty, and had not *then* appeared as an author, he could not at *that* time be prevailed on by any solicitations to comply with their request.---However, at a particular friend's desire, he transcribed it from his short-hand copy, and gave it to him.---Some years afterwards this friend desired Mr. *Hervey* to revise it with a view of its being published; which (in conjunction with a very eminent divine) he accordingly did; and then returned the copy to his friend; telling him that as the *Meditations on the Tombs*, &c. had been so well received, he had *now* no objection against publishing it with some other sermons; and that he might one day or another require it of him again for that purpose.---This sermon is printed from that very copy; and Mr. *Hervey* himself would probably have added it to the volume, which contains his four sermons, had he happened to recollect that it was in the possession of a friend, who would willingly have relinquished it to its author for publication.



2 COR. V. 18.

All things are of GOD, who hath reconciled us to himself by JESUS CHRIST, and hath given to us the ministry of reconciliation.

THE love of GOD, that supremely glorious, and supremely gracious Being, is of all other tempers, the most delightful and divine. A sacred flower, which in its early bud is happiness, and in its full bloom is heaven.—To plant this noble principle in the breast, to cultivate its growth, and
L 3 bring

bring it to maturity, is the grand end of all religion, and the genuine fruit of faith unfeigned.—Angels are happy, because the love of GOD triumphs eternally, and without a rival, in their exalted affections *. True believers are happy, because the love of GOD, in a prevailing degree, is shed abroad in their hearts. The gospel is a dispensation of happiness, because it discovers the super-abundant loving-kindness of GOD to man, and urges the most engaging motives for our ardent love to his almighty Majesty.

The gospel represents the great GOD, not only as bestowing upon
his

* To be *good* is to be happy :—Angels are happier than men, because they are better.

Guilt is the source of sorrow ; 'tis the fiend.

• Th' *avenging* fiend, who follows us behind;

With whips and stings; the *blest* know none of *this*,

But rest in everlasting peace of mind.

Row 2.

his creatures, all the good they enjoy ; but as effecting their reconciliation to his own adorable self. Effecting this most desirable of all blessings, not barely by vouchsafing a pardon, but a pardon procured by the death of his Son : and, by this enriching circumstance, infinitely enhanced ; arrayed in all the charms that heaven itself could give.—To render the purposes of his love more effectual and extensive, he has instituted an order of men to publish these glad tidings ; and to invite, yea to beseech the world, to partake the exceeding riches of his grace.—All which the apostle has expressed in my text, with his usual energy and conciseness ; “ All things
 “ are of GOD, who hath reconciled
 “ us to himself by *JESUS CHRIST*,
 “ and hath given to us the ministry
 “ of reconciliation.”

L 4

From

From which words, permit me with all that simplicity, which becomes a minister of the humble JESUS,

I. To enlarge a little upon that glorious and amiable representation of the blessed GOD, discoverable even by the light of nature, "All things "are of him."

II. To remind you, how much more illustriously the delightful attributes of the DEITY are displayed in the accomplishment of our redemption; in that "he hath reconciled us "to himself by JESUS CHRIST."

III. To observe the benign import, and beneficial tendency of the gospel ministry, expressed in that remarkable clause, "He hath given to us the "ministry of reconciliation."

First, Then let me enlarge a little upon that glorious and amiable representation

sentation of the blessed GOD, discoverable even by the light of nature, "All things are of him."—Heaven, and the heaven of heavens are his, with all their hosts. Thrones and dominions, principalities and powers, all the happy beings, that sit at the fountain-head of felicity, were produced by his power, and are supplied with blessings from his hand, are filled with joy from his countenance.

—If we trace the various emanations of comfort and advantage, that refresh our lower world, we shall find reason to acknowledge with the *Psalmist*, "All our fresh springs are in GOD." The day is thine, says the same sacred writer, and the night is thine; Thou hast prepared the light and the sun. The magnificent luminaries in the sky, are lamps of the LORD; hung up on high, to dispense the cheering gift of

light amidst all the families of nature. The interchanges of night and day, with the vicissitudes of revolving seasons, are his ministers; all sent on errands of kindness, and bringing the most valuable presents in their hands. The innumerable variety of living creatures, and of nutrimental vegetables, are the portion, not which our own industry has procured, but which our heavenly Father's bounty has settled upon us.

Every great endowment, bestowed on the children of men; every noble achievement, accomplished by renowned personages; these derive their original from the uncreated fountain of perfection and of power.—If *Solomon* is possessed of enlarged wisdom, and kingly qualities; he expressly acknowledges, It is from the LORD, superintending human affairs, that such

such kings are advanced to reign: and by the LORD enlightening their minds, that such princes decree justice. If, at one period, *Nebuchadnezzar* pursues his conquest with irresistible impetuosity, it is to scourge the offending people of the LORD; and banish idolatry from their worship, as the driving wind swept the chaff from their floors. If, at another juncture, *Cyrus* is equally victorious, and “comes upon princes as upon mortar, and as the potter treadeth clay;” it was the LORD of hosts that raised up this accomplished commander from the east, and bid him execute his designs of restoring love to his reformed nation.—All those arts which meliorate, and sciences which embellish life, even these are from the LORD, “who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working.”

The time would fail me to enumerate particulars.—Whatever is beneficial to communities, or comfortable to individuals; whatever springs from the rain of heaven, or is produced by fruitful seasons; whatever administers to the improvement, or cheers the heart of man; all, all acknowledge GOD for their Author. He is the Giver of every good and perfect gift. The whole earth is filled with the profusion of his beneficence. And where, where is the creature, that has not tasted, that does not subsist on, the inexhaustible stores of his bounty?—And though affliction also comes from the Father of our Spirits, yet this is no derogation from his tender mercies. Since he chastens, not with an arbitrary severity, but with a parental piety; he chastens, only to amend; and these light, these transient tribulations,

lations, are preparatives for an exceeding great and eternal weight of glory.

And is not such a Being worthy of our highest admiration, and our devoutest love? Has he not, by such ineffable excellencies, such unmeasurable benignity—Has he not an undoubted claim, to the affections of our hearts, the praises of our tongues, and the unintermitted services of our lives? He is the source of all our good; should he not also be the centre of all our gratitude, and of our whole obedience?—But, our obligations will rise immensely higher, if we consider,

Secondly, How much more illustriously the delightful attributes of the DEITY are displayed in the accomplishment of our redemption; in that
 “ he hath reconciled us to himself by
 “ JESUS

“JESUS CHRIST.”—Man was created upright, immaculate, and in the image of GOD. Heavenly wisdom shone bright in his understanding, and true holiness sat enthroned in his heart.—But how soon, how fatally, did he fall! From what height of perfection, to what depth of degeneracy! Since that destructive transgression, all flesh has corrupted his way; every man is become brutish in his knowledge; and the imagination of the thoughts of his heart, is only evil continually. “Our iniquities separated “between us and our GOD, and our “sins hid his face from us,” as from an abominable object. Nay, our sins accused us at his righteous tribunal, and, like the blood of *Abel*, cried to heaven for vengeance. Vengeance and fiery indignation was our expected doom, and eternal * death the wages

wages due to our offences.—What rendered the misery of mankind still more excessively deplorable, and only not desperate, was, That they *were without strength*; without any power to make satisfaction for their provocations, or extricate themselves from this abyss of woe.—O wretched, wretched man, if left in this state of guilt and ruin! If abandoned by GOD, from whom thou hast ungratefully revolted, better had it been for thee never to have existed.

But, behold the kindness and love of GOD our Saviour! Hearken to the founding of his bowels and of his mercies towards us! “I have seen,
 “said he, (as in the case of enslaved
 “*Israel*) I have seen the affliction of
 “my fallen creatures. They have
 “undone themselves, but in me * is
 “their

* See Hosea ch. xii. 9.

“ their recovery. Satan has deceived,
“ and deceiving has destroyed them;
“ but I, even I will deliver them.”

Wherewithal will the LORD accomplish this design by his free unmerited goodness? By the blood of bulls, or of goats, or of all the cattle upon a thousand hills? Contemptible to the last degree, are such beggarly oblations; only so far as they typify the all-glorious sacrifice. Was an angel charged with this important business, or the highest seraph bidden to interpose as the repairer of our breach? The angels were absolutely incapable of executing so great a work. It required a far abler agent, to negotiate our reconciliation. It must cost incomparably more, to redeem guilty souls. Therefore the GOD of our salvation “ laid the help upon one
“ that is mighty.” He appointed, to
the

the most momentous of all offices, the most illustrious of all beings. He appointed his own Son, the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person.

Behold then the Son of GOD, taking our nature, that he may act as our mediator. Admirable constitution! full of wonder, and full of grace!—How joyful to the sinner! The work must infallibly prosper in such hands. Such a surety cannot fail of succeeding in all he undertakes.—How gracious in the Father! Could there be no stronger assurance, or a more emphatical demonstration of his boundless beneficence, than to send the son of his bosom; the son of his eternal delight; the son, dearer to him than all worlds?—How condescending in the Saviour! Would *Abasuerus* abdicate his imperial diadem, or the great ruler

ruler of *Babylon* forego the honours of his enlarged dominions, to attend on the welfare of some ignoble captive that grinds at a mill, or of some infamous malefactor that is chained in a dungeon? Yet the everlasting potentate of heaven and universal nature, undertakes a more humbling office of friendship, for a race of abject creatures, that dwell in dust, and were doomed to hell.—Let every child of *Adam* look unto *CHRIST* by faith, as all the people of *Israel* looked unto *Moses*, when he went into the tabernacle of the congregation to intercede before the LORD. (See *Exodus xxxiii. 8.*)

We have seen the *person* reconciling, let us next contemplate the *manner* of reconciling. A subject equally astonishing and delightful! The Father reconciled us to himself, by laying upon
his

his Son the iniquities of us all: by admitting him to stand in our stead, and by exacting from him, the punishment which he had incurred.—GOD reconciled us to himself, not only by the humiliation, but by the suffering of this Prince of heaven: and not by some flighter suffering, but by his suffering unto death: and not by his undergoing a common death, but the most ignominious and tormenting of all deaths, the death of the cross. “It pleased the Father, says the apostle, to reconcile all things to himself; making peace by the blood of the cross.”—Because we deserved shame; the LORD of glory was numbered with malefactors, and loaded with infamy. Because, we deserved the bitterness of death; the LORD of life endured the pangs of dissolution, in their unabated and most racking

racking extremities. Because, we were obnoxious to the curse of the law, therefore the ever-blessed "JESUS delivered us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us."

Glorious propitiation; and altogether as complete as glorious! What now shall terrify the true believer? What shall stand between him and his eternal hopes?—Shall Satan muster up his accusations, and set them in frightful array? Yet, though there may be much guilt, there is no condemnation to them that are in *JESUS CHRIST*.—Does the law take the guilty mortal by the throat, and with its rigorous severity say, "Pay me that thou owest?" It is paid, fully paid by the intervention and suretyship, not of a mean man, but of the mighty GOD made flesh. Does di-
vine

vine justice demand satisfaction, for the wrongs received from sinners? It is not only satisfied, but most awfully glorified by this wonderful oblation.— In short, this is a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the whole world. It vindicates the honour of GOD's holiness. It displays his unfathomable wisdom. It manifests his unutterable goodness. It gives the most magnificent and lovely lustre to all the divine perfections.— May we not then, looking unto our bleeding Saviour, and pleading his inestimable propitiation, venture to adopt the apostle's challenge? “ Who shall lay any thing to the charge of GOD's elect? It is GOD that justifieth;” not imputing our trespasses unto us, but transferring them to his dear Son. “ Who is he that condemneth? It is *CHRIST* that died,” and
by

by his precious death hath made reconciliation for iniquity, and brought in everlasting righteousness.

I have been the more copious upon this subject, because it is not only the grand point in my text, but is the very heart of the gospel; the fountain of all our comforts, and the foundation of all our hopes.—But I proceed, and with great brevity,

Thirdly, To observe the benign import, and beneficial tendency of the gospel-ministry, expressed in that remarkable clause, “ he hath given to “ us the ministry of reconciliation.” Here, I am not attempting to magnify my office, or to aggrandize the ministerial character; but only to render our services *acceptable* to our brethren.—Some persons, whether through prejudice or mistake, are apprehensive of being terrified by our message,

message, or “tormented before the
 “time” by our doctrine. But can
 the news of reconciliation to the
 LORD GOD of hosts, terrify, or the
 offer of remission of sins torment?
 How welcome should be the approach,
 or to speak in the elegant language of
 a prophet, “How beautiful the feet
 “of him, that bringeth good tidings!”
 And can there be better tidings, more
 reviving, or more transporting, than
 those of the everlasting gospel? Which
 saith unto *Sion*, “Thy iniquity is ta-
 “ken away, and thy sin purged:”
 thy GOD is reconciled, and instead
 of abhorring thee as a rebel, is willing
 to embrace thee as a child.—When
 our armies have been in the field, and
 some very important, some decisive
 engagement drawing near; with what
 eagerness have you expected, and with
 what delight have you received, the
 account

account of complete victory gained? And is not our report equally worthy of all acceptation; which declares Satan vanquished, and sin destroyed; declares death abolished, hell deprived of its prey, and all the rich advantages of peace with heaven restored?—When *Peter* lay bound in prison, was the angel an unwelcome minister, who struck away his fetters, opened the gates of iron, and transmitted him, free and unmolested, to the cordial salutations of his friends? As you are all, by nature, in bondage to sin, our business is, to take you by the hand, and lead you out of this ignominious slavery, into the glorious liberty of the sons of GOD; while the spirit of the Most High breaks off your shackles, and makes you free indeed.—What manna can be more refreshing than such a message? What balm more healing

healing than such a service.—If, at any time, we arm our words with terror, and denounce the vengeance of GOD, on every soul of man, that doth evil. This is only to awaken you from that gay insensibility, which would lull you into irretrievable ruin. It is like the gathering clouds, and the distant bursts of thunder, which might warn *Noah* to retire into the ark, before that infinitely more tremendous deluge came, which was to sweep the careless world away.—Whether therefore we display the allurements of divine love, it is for your delight; or whether we bend the bow of divine indignation, it is for your benefit: to win you to happiness, or drive you from misery. So that in every respect, and by all our ministrations, we are to be “helpers
M “ of

“of your faith, and furtherers of your
“joy.”

And let not any suspect, that a message of such free and rich grace, has a tendency to soothe men into supineness, or serve the cause of licentiousness. It is, of all other expedients, most effectually calculated to reconcile us to GOD, in another sense of the word : to subdue our enmity, and captivate our perverse affections ; to impress our alienated hearts with adoring gratitude, and engage our refractory wills to dutiful obedience. — For, can we be cold and indifferent to such immense benignity ? Can we affront and grieve such unspeakably tender kindness ? What effect had *David's* clemency in sparing *Saul's* life, when it was in the power of his hand, to have dispatched that implacable enemy ? It overcame, for a
while,

while, even malice itself: it fetched tears of sorrow from the persecutor's eyes, and expressions of the most endeared affections from his lips *. And when GOD, the GOD to whom vengeance belongeth, not only spares us guilty wretches, but punishes his immaculate Son in our stead; when he bids the sword of justice pass by our devoted heads, and sheath itself in the heart of his beloved Son; can we resist such heavenly goodness? Can we spurn such bowels of mercy? Must not love, so divine and infinite, melt even the most obdurate heart; make us fling down with abhorrence, the weapons of rebellion, and constrain us, sweetly constrain us to obedience †?

M. 2

Let

* 1 Sam. xxiv 16.

† Mr. Hervey had added by way of a note the following words

Let me now, conformably to my sacred commission, beseech you all to be reconciled. Especially let me beseech the humble penitent, and the haughty self-righteous moralist.—Ye humble penitents, that are convinced of sin, and mourn for sin, be of good comfort. GOD has abounded in the riches of his grace towards you, and has given you a ransom to rely on, of higher dignity than all heavens, or of more value than all worlds. The men of *Tyre* made *Blastus* the king's chamberlain their friend †; the GOD of glory has constituted his dear Son, your atoning sacrifice, your prevailing advocate. The men of *Tyre* desired conditions of peace; the LORD JESUS

words in the copy which he transcribed, and from which this is printed. "When I preached this sermon, I recapitulated in this place, (as you, or any reader may do if he pleases) the preceding heads, but I thought it unnecessary to transcribe such a recapitulation."

† Acts xii. 20.

SUS hath both obtained and fulfilled the conditions of your peace. Could there be a more glorious person chose to act as your reconciler, than the Prince of heaven, and heir of all things? Could there be a more effectual method of reconciliation, than his obedience unto death, even the death of the cross?—Fly then to this all-sufficient Redeemer. Rely on his most meritorious and satisfactory sufferings. Be your sins ever so numerous, ever so enormous, these need be no bar to your acceptance. For GOD has received an atonement: an infinite atonement GOD has received. So that he can admit you to his favour, unworthy as you are, without the least blemish to his avenging justice. He can, he will admit you, as freely, as if you had never done amiss. Trust therefore in your reconciling Saviour.

Place a chearful confidence in his propitiating merits. Only let the grace of GOD, which has appeared with such transcendent loveliness in the bleeding *JESUS*,—let this grace teach you, with a prevailing efficacy, “to deny all ungodliness and worldly lusts, “and to live soberly, righteously, “and godlily in this present world.”

As to those of a contrary character, who are righteous in their own eyes, what shall I say? Shall I decry the exercise of morality, or disparage the duties of holiness? GOD forbid. The gospel is a doctrine according to godliness, and true holiness is the health, is the happiness of the soul. These duties issuing from faith, and recommended by the intercession of *CHRIST*, are acceptable to the divine Majesty. But these are *not* your SAVIOUR. GOD has not reconciled the world to himself

himself by their *own* pious practices, but by his Son *JESUS CHRIST*.— Can your charitable deeds expiate your innumerable offences? As soon may a single drop of pure water, correct and sweeten the unfathomable brine of the ocean. Can your defective performances satisfy the demands of a perfect law, or your wandering devotions screen you from the displeasure of an injured GOD? As well may your uplifted-hand eclipse the sun, or intercept the lightning when it darts through the bursting cloud. —There is no other name given under heaven, whereby you may be reconciled to GOD, and saved from wrath, but only the name, only the name remember of *JESUS CHRIST*. Here fix your hopes, and you shall never be disappointed. Fix them on any other object, and everlasting con-

fusion will ensue.—We beseech you therefore, in GOD's stead, we beseech you for your own soul's sake, reject not this abundant mercy, neglect not this *GREAT SALVATION*.

Now unto him, who has reconciled us to himself, and washed us from our sins, in his Son's blood; be glory and thanksgiving, love and obedience, henceforth and for ever.



A DEFENCE by R. Y. of the foregoing Sermon, from the groundless objections raised against it by some inconsiderate readers.

IT is scarcely credible, that any one should assert, that Mr. *Hervey's* posthumous sermon on the *Ministry of Reconciliation*, is contradictory to the *Dialogues*

logues in Theron and Aspasio, and affirm that it has done injury to the work :

—But such an assertion is easily refuted.—This complaint is either lodged by the friends or foes, of the deceased : If by his friends, then I suppose it is because the doctrine of imputed righteousness, which makes so great a figure in those dialogues, is not mentioned, it is strongly implied ; and what is strongly implied in this place, cannot be contradictory to what is expressed in others. In that sermon, do we not read in the strongest terms, “ That our iniquities are im-
 “ puted to CHRIST, by the FATHER’S
 “ admitting him to stand in our
 “ stead, and exacting from him the
 “ punishment which we had incur-
 “ red ? *Do we not here find* GOD re-
 “ conciling us to himself, not only
 “ by the humiliation, but by the suf-

“ ferings of the Prince of heaven?
“ And not by some flighter suffer-
“ ings, but by his sufferings unto
“ death ; and not by his undergoing
“ a common death, but the most ig-
“ nominiuous tormenting of all deaths,
“ the death upon the cross.”

And as we find the imputation of
our sins so plainly inserted here, so
we find in the Dialogues, that “ this
“ part of our LORD’s meritorious hu-
“ miliation, is by a very usual figure
“ put for the whole. The death of
“ CHRIST, includes not only his suf-
“ ferings, but his obedience. The
“ shedding of his precious blood, was
“ at once the grand instance of his
“ sufferings, and the finishing act of
“ his obedience. In this view it is
“ considered, and thus it is interpre-
“ ted by his own ambassador, who
“ speaking of his divine MASTER
“ says

“ says—*He was obedient unto death, e-*
 “ *ven the death of the cross.*—When
 “ the scripture ascribes our justifica-
 “ tion to the death of CHRIST, we
 “ are not to think that it would set
 “ aside, but imply his obedience.”
 (*Theron and Aspasio*, Vol. II. pag. 47.
 48.) Now if we are not to think this
 of the Scripture, in Mr. *Hervey's* opi-
 nion, how then can we think it of
 him? And without thinking it, where
 lies the inconsistency between the Ser-
 mon and the Dialogues?

But I rather imagine, that the
 charge is brought by Mr. *Hervey's* e-
 nemies: Some of these people, to a-
 void being thought *Socinians*, seem
 willing to allow the satisfaction of
 CHRIST, while they declare against
 the doctrine of justification by the
 imputation of his righteousness, and
 such are extremely willing to inter-

pret Mr. *Hervey's* silence into a consent to their own pernicious sentiments: *Theron* and *Aspasio* is a dead weight upon them; they have not, nor can they answer it; willingly therefore would they come off, by saying the author had contradicted himself: But ~~false~~ is their pretence, and as false is their profession. *That they allow the satisfaction of CHRIST* for imputation, is as reasonable and as justifiable, in the one case as in the other; they both stand upon one and the same footing, so he that throws down one, throws down both; whoever rejects the doctrine of our SAVIOUR's righteousness being imputed unto man, rejects by so doing the doctrine of man's sins being imputed to our Saviour, and all the consequences of it; or in other words, he who rejects the doctrine of free justification, rejects
by

by so doing the doctrine of CHRIST.
(See *Theron* and *Aspasio*, Vol. I. page
182.

As the main design in writing *Theron* and *Aspasio*, was to prove the fundamental doctrine of justification by the imputed righteousness of CHRIST; and as it appears that the sermon does not contradict it in this most important article; I suppose it will be allowed, that the charge of contradiction, as to what is most material, is entirely got over; but perhaps in a matter of less consequence, it may still be objected, that Mr. *Hervey* in the Dialogues appears plainly to be *Calvinistic*, in the doctrine of PARTICULAR redemption; but in the Sermon he says expressly, that CHRIST's "death is a full, perfect, and sufficient sacrifice for the sins of the WHOLE world."---The Church of *England* says

says this, as well as Mr. *Hervey*, in the office for the communion ; and yet no unprejudiced person will question, but she is perfectly *Calvinistical*, in her articles and homilies.

The truth is, there is no *Calvinist* but will allow, that the satisfaction of CHRIST is full, perfect, and sufficient for ALL, but then they distinguish between the sufficiency and efficiency of his sacrifice. With regard to the value of the oblation, it is sufficient for the redemption of every man ; with regard to its efficacy, as every man is benefited by the death of CHRIST, so CHRIST died for him, but these benefits are not of one kind. — Some are common to every man ; all the earthly blessings which unbelievers enjoy, are the fruits of CHRIST's death : so far as they are benefited by him, so far he died for them ;

them; other benefits belong to the members of the visible church, and are common to all those who live under the gospel: Many graces such may receive from CHRIST, which through their own fault are not saving; and so far as they are benefited by CHRIST, so far CHRIST died for them; other benefits still, according to the will of GOD, and the intention of the MEDIATOR, are peculiar to those, which he himself says are given unto him by the FATHER; his sheep, his elect, such as a true faith, regeneration, sanctification, adoption, &c. In this sense, say those Christians called *Calvinists*, CHRIST died for his people only to bring them effectually to grace and to glory.—This system only is consistent with Mr. *Hervey's* notion of free grace.

The *Arminian* scheme is, That
CHRIST

CHRIST died with a purpose to make the salvation of every man in the world possible, without any manner of difference, whether they are believers or unbelievers: That he died, not to bring any man actually to salvation, and make him a partaker of righteousness and life, but to purchase a possibility of salvation and reconciliation, so far as that GOD might, consistent with his justice, receive men into favour upon condition of faith and repentance. This faith and repentance, say they, CHRIST merited not; for if he had, then GOD had been bound to give them unto every man, and so every man must have been saved. Thus you see, according to these gentlemen, CHRIST died equally for all the world; and the reason why some are saved, lies wholly in themselves, in attaining to that
faith

faith and repentance, by the good use of their natural powers, which CHRIST did not purchase for them: This is the meaning of every *Arminian* *, let him express himself however

* That the reader may still more clearly apprehend the doctrine of Mr. *Hervey*, who was a *Calvinist*---and the difference between *him*, and the *Arminians*, the following note is subjoined.

" The *Arminians* are supposed by some, (who are not
 " sufficiently acquainted with their tenets) to maintain that
 " we are to do *something* for ourselves, and *Christ* to do the
 " rest; or in other words, that we have *partly* a righteousness
 " of our own, and that *Jesus Christ* is to make up the
 " deficiencies of that righteousness. This however is not
 " the common divinity of the *Arminians*. They have no
 " such notion of a *patch-work* justification, or that we are
 " saved *partly* by the imputation of *Christ's* merits to make
 " up the deficiencies of our own. But the principles of their
 " scheme are briefly these.-- That *Christ* is the *sole* and *only*
 " Author of our salvation, not by *imputing* his righteousness
 " to us, but by *purchasing* such *favourable terms* of re-
 " conciliation for us, and by *restoring* to us such *abilities* to
 " fulfil them, by means of which we can only become *capa-*
 " *ble* of being justified in the sight of God. Therefore we
 " say, that those in this life, who have used well the *grace*
 " that is *given* them, and conformed to the terms of the
 " gospel

ever he will: And how far this is inconsistent with Mr. *Hervey's* exhortation

“gospel, *God doth justify*: That is, were he to call them
 “to the bar of judgment and try them, he would acquit or
 “pronounce them not guilty.--Because *Christ*, by his meritorious death and sufferings, having purchased for them
 “the law of repentance, as the law by which they are to be
 “judged and tried; and they having through grace fulfilled
 “the law, i. e. become true penitents, God therefore, for
 “the above merits of *Christ*, admits of their qualifications,
 “forgives them their offences, and rewards them as if they
 “had never offended. Here then is no splitting of the imputation, no copartnership with *Christ*. But *Christ's* righteousness is represented, as the sole procuring cause of our
 “salvation, and ours as only the applying cause, by performing the requisite conditions: i. e. They both tend to different ends; one to procure the terms of justification,
 “and the other to perform them.--So that, in short, according to this scheme of the *Arminians*, our justification is
 “not made up partly of *Christ's* righteousness, and partly of our own; for his righteousness is not partly imputed, but
 “not at all imputed, in the Calvinistical sense of imputation.
 “In order to make this difference of opinion still clearer, it
 “must be observed, that the *Calvinists* (being accustomed to their ideas of imputative righteousness) imagine that when
 “the *Arminians* affirm the necessity of inherent righteousness in order to justification, that they mean a borrowing of
 “*Christ's* imputative righteousness to make up the deficiencies of our own. Whereas the *Arminians* indeed suppose,
 “that

tion to the self-righteous moralist, in the close of this sermon, I believe I need not tell you. Indeed, Mr. *Hervy* engages not here in the controversy at all; (but going upon what both sides are agreed in, *viz.* the sufficiency of CHRIST'S sacrifice to save all that will believe) he invites all his hearers to fly unto him for salvation. Now, if he never enters into the merits of the cause, how can he be guilty of inconsistency?

Upon the whole, then, this is a
most

"that *Christ* did not, in any degree, fulfil the terms of justification in our stead; but, on the contrary, having purchased them for us, and procured us sufficient powers and abilities of performing them, he left us to co-operate with those powers, and so to fulfil them ourselves." This is a fair, candid, and consistent state of the *Arminian* doctrine. No one can say it is misrepresented, for 'tis here given in the very words of an eminent divine, and dignitary of the Church of England, who is himself an *Arminian* --- How much superior the *Calvinistic* (which was Mr. *Hervy's*) doctrine is, to humble the sinner, to exalt the Saviour, and to promote holiness; let every reader judge.

most excellent sermon. As the Dialogues in *Theron* and *Aspasio* were, so is this, the true offspring † of him who now rests from his labours, and his works do follow him; the offspring of him who always fought to exalt the SAVIOUR, to humble the sinner, and to promote holiness.

C O N.

† The sermon itself, in Mr. *Hervey's* own writing, is now in the hands of the Reverend Mr. *Robert Knight*, the present Rector of *Weston-Favell*, who married Mr. *Hervey's* youngest sister.

CONSIDERATIONS

ON THE

PREVAILING CUSTOM

OF

VISITING

ON THE

S A B B A T H.

P R E F A C E.

THE sentiments here offered against the *prevailing custom of profaning the Sabbath*, will probably be a satisfaction to every serious reader, and be productive of much good, especially as it is in every body's power to reform *one*, and as then his own conduct will be a tacit reproof to his acquaintance, who may probably through his example, be induced to weigh these proceedings attentively, and no longer *follow a multitude to do evil*.-----It is certainly a matter of importance to enquire, Whether *Sabbath-visits* are justifiable upon the principles of scripture and of reason? as the conscientious observation of the Sabbath has of late years been so much disregarded; and as it is now become the principal *day of visiting* among persons of all ranks.----The chief advocates for the continuance of such a practice should, methinks, defend it publicly, that their arguments may be properly examined, if, in their opinion, such a custom can admit of any rational defence. And those, who are sufficiently convinced by what is here advanced, should resolve to discontinue *Sabbath-visits* themselves, and discountenance them in others, as far as they can, consistent with decency and prudence.----That the number of such well-disposed persons may be daily increasing, is undoubtedly the hearty wish of every one who is sincerely desirous of promoting the glory of God, and the good of mankind.



CONSIDERATIONS

On the prevailing Custom of

VISITING on the SABBATH.

QUESTION.

*Whether it be right for TRULY SERIOUS
persons to visit on the Sabbath?*

THE persons here mentioned,
T are the *truly serious*. As to
many people, it matters not
whether they are at home
or abroad: God is not in all their
thoughts; they have no concern for
their eternal welfare; they therefore
are,

are, in every respect, altogether and alike unprofitable.

But when we begin the things that are excellent; when we sincerely desire to “obtain salvation, with eternal glory, by JESUS CHRIST;” “then,” whether it be proper to fall in with the prevailing custom of visiting on the Sabbath, is the question.

Were our companions religious, and was our conversation edifying, I should make no scruple to give my voice in the affirmative. Every parlour would then be a little sanctuary; would echo back the exhortations, and second the designs of the pulpit. And we might truly say, “It is good “for us to be here.”

But, alas! where do we find such company? When do we hear such conversation? The general conversation is all impertinence. Not so much

as

as seasoned with a spice of religion. "They talk of vanity every one with his neighbour *." For which reason, I cannot think it safe or expedient, allowable or innocent, habitually to visit on the Sabbath.

It is inconsistent with the best example. "I was in the spirit on the Lord's day," says St. John. I was filled with the communications of the holy Spirit, giving me clear views of Christ, bright hopes of glory, and shedding abroad the love of God in my heart. But is this compatible with the idle, trifling, insignificant chat, which engrosses our ordinary visits?

OBJECTION I. Will it be said, the apostle's was a peculiar case? I answer, it was a peculiarly happy case. And will a prudent Christian relinquish the prospect of such unspeakable happiness,

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* Psal. xii. 2.

ness, for the most empty and delu-
sory amusement? But I believe, it was
not peculiar to the apostle; rather
the common privilege of all believers;
written as a pattern for their practice,
and to be the plan of their expecta-
tions.

It is contrary to the divine prohi-
bition. The negative law, relating
to the Sabbath, is, "Not doing thy
" own ways, not finding thy own
" pleasure, not speaking thy own
" words *. Not doing thy own
ways;" abstaining from secular bu-
siness, and all worldly pursuits. "Not
" finding thy own pleasure;" re-
nouncing all those recreations and a-
musements, which may tend to gra-
tify thy taste, not to glorify thy Al-
mighty Lord. "Not speaking thy
" own

* If. lviii. 13.

“own words;” conversing on spiritual, sublime, and heavenly subjects, not on low, earthly, temporal matters, which, having no reference to the Creator’s honour, are therefore called thy own. However some people may act, or whatever they may think, this is the express and unalterable law, established by the God of heaven. Whether it be possible to mingle in modish company, and obey this law, let those judge who are acquainted with the world.

It breaks the divine command. The positive law relating to the Sabbath, is, “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” *Remember, take particular notice of this injunction.* It is a duty greatly to be regarded, and most conscientiously to be observed. Upon the due observance of this, our disposition and ability, to

observe the other precepts, in good measure, depends. *Keep it holy*; devote it to holy purposes; spend it in holy exercises; and not barely an hour or two; not barely the intervals of private and public devotion; but the day; the Sabbath-day; the whole day. Neither will the whole day be too long, if we make conscience of discharging the several duties of religion, reading and meditation; prayer and praise; teaching our children, and instructing our domestics; examining our hearts, and taking heed to our ways. All these offices, if properly performed, will leave very little, rather no time for unnecessary elopements. And shall we huddle over all these important offices, or totally neglect some of them, only to indulge ourselves in the most unprofitable levities? at once doing an injury to our
spiritual

spiritual interests, and violating the divine precept.

I fear, it will be a kind of “crucifying afresh our blessed master †.” This expression we have often read, but think ourselves free from the guilt implied in it, and indeed from the very likelihood of contracting it. But let us be reminded, that “we crucify our Lord afresh,” when we give others occasion to conclude, that we have very little esteem for him, or gratitude to him, consequently, that he has little or no excellency, for which we or others should desire him. Now what else can the world conclude, when they see us giving into the vanities of a licentious mode, on that day, which is sacred to the commemoration of his resurrection? “Sure-

N 3

“ly,

† Heb. vi. 6.

“ ly, might the children of this world
 “ say, if these Christians had any real
 “ reverence for their Lord, they
 “ would shew it on *his own day*.
 “ They would either be retired to
 “ contemplate and adore him; or else
 “ come abroad to exalt and glorify
 “ him. But they come abroad to be
 “ as frothy in their talk, and as
 “ trifling in their temper, as forget-
 “ ful of their Saviour, and as regard-
 “ less of his honour, as the most ar-
 “ rant worldling among us all.” To
 afford a handle for such reflections, is
 to wound the Redeemer in the house
 of his friends.

It will *grieve the holy Spirit* †.
 Christians believe, that he is infinitely
 wise, all-gracious, and ever-blessed:
 that he dwells in their hearts, and is
 the

† Eph. iv. 30.

the source of all their holiness and all their happiness. Therefore we pray daily in our liturgy, "that the holy Spirit may not be taken from us." On Sunday, we commemorate the descent of this divine guest; and are, in a particular manner, to implore his presence, and cultivate his influences. But can this be done, by neglecting his express prohibition, and breaking his positive command? by disregarding the examples, which he has set before us; and dishonouring that Saviour, whom he delights to magnify? Besides, dare any mortal presume to say in his heart, amidst a circle of our polite visitants, "I am now acting in a manner, becoming my relation to the eternal Spirit. These sentiments and this discourse are suitable to his dignity, wisdom, and glory. A proper method of celebrating

“celebrating and honouring the day
“of his miraculous mission?”

Should any one ask, “What is
“meant by *grieving the holy Spirit*?”
It means offending his exalted Majesty,
and causing him to act as men com-
monly act, when they are grieved
and displeased with any one. They
withdraw from his company and visit
him no more. When Samuel was
grieved for Saul’s misbehaviour, it is
written, “He came no more to see
“Saul.” If the almighty Comforter
be provoked to deal thus with our
souls, alas! what a loss must we su-
stain! A loss, unspeakable, irrepara-
ble, eternal!

So that if this practice were not
sinful, it must be exceedingly detri-
mental. And that, not in one only,
but in various respects. Have we re-
ceived spiritual good from the public
ordinan-

ordinances? The admonition of heaven is, "We ought to give the more earnest heed to the things which we have heard, lest at any time we should let them slip †." By this practice, we not only suffer them to slip, but open as it were a leak for their immediate discharge. Have we been under edifying impressions from our private exercises? The unerring direction is, "Quench not the Spirit." Stifle not the serious desires, which he has awakened. Allow them their full scope, till they are formed into gracious habits. By the practice under consideration, we pour water instead of oil upon the feeble flame; we extinguish what we should cherish. Is the heavenly seed sown in our breasts? These dissipating interviews are

† Heb. ii. 1.

are the ravenous birds, which follow the feed-man, and devour the grain; so that nothing takes root. No fruit of faith, of joy, or love, is produced.

Let me only add, that, on a dying-bed, the misimprovement of all our time will be most bitterly regretted. How much more the misimprovement of *those* hours, which God himself has hallowed: has set apart for the noblest purposes; and is wont to bless in an especial manner! “While others
“were seeking the pearl of great
“price; and gathering those treasures
“of wisdom and grace, which endure
“to everlasting life; I, alas! was
“squandering away the precious opportunities in very vanity.” To see the curtain of time dropping; to see a vast eternity opening before us; and to have such reflections haunting our conscience: this will cause misery,
not

not to be expressed ; create anguish,
not to be conceived.

OBJECT. II. Will it be said, in answer to these considerations, “ That
“ company, even trifling company,
“ is a relaxation. We return to the
“ instruction of our families, and to
“ our evening devotion, with fresh
“ alacrity, being sick of these triflers ? ”

A strange argument ! It should rather be reversed. The objectors might truly say ; Being sick of religion and its services, we want such triflers to afford us some relief. The sincere servant of Christ would find no recreation, but feel grief of heart, in such interviews. It must be a real affliction to observe his divine Lord absolutely disregarded. Disregarded on the day peculiarly devoted to his honour. Every vanity now preferred before him, as Barabbas the robber

was

was formerly. The true refreshment of our souls consists in having our faith increased, our hope elevated, and our views of heaven enlarged: in contemplating the infinite perfection and glory of our REDEEMER; the infinite grandeur and fulness of his propitiation; and our complete, I might have said, our infinite security from wrath and vengeance, by being interested in his merits.

OBJECT. III. "The Sabbath is the best part of our time for this purpose. Business is suspended. Every body is ready dressed. All circumstances invite." Is it the best part of our time? Then let it be devoted to the best of Beings. Who is more worthy of our choicest thoughts, affections, hours, than that divinely compassionate Saviour, who offered himself, in the very prime of his life, a
bleeding

bleeding victim for our sins, that this sacrifice might have every recommending circumstance, which could render it acceptable to God, and available to man?

OBJECT. IV. "It is the universal custom. To discontinue it, would render us unfashionable." And cannot you bear to be a little unfashionable for his sake, who was despised and rejected, who humbled himself to death, even the death of the cross, for your sake? Is it the universal custom? Then custom is the idol, which we are called to renounce. I must say of custom, in this case, as Elijah said of Baal; If custom be God, follow its dictates; but if JEHOVAH be God, observe his precepts. It is written in the scriptures, "Be not conformed to this world *." To what does this

O prohibi-

† Rom. xii. 2.

prohibition relate? To such ungodly customs, no doubt. No battery of cannon was ever pointed more directly against a citadel to be demolished, than this text against such customs. In indifferent matters, let the Christian avoid singularity. Let him dress somewhat like his neighbours. Let him make an appearance suitable to his station. But let him not follow a multitude to profane the Sabbath, or to *do any evil*. Here religious persons should, by all means, be singular; should distinguish themselves by a becoming zeal for their God; should set an example, and shine as lights, in the midst of a crooked and perverse generation. Otherwise, they may do, not themselves only, but others also, incredible harm.

OBJECT. V. Some perhaps may start, and reply, "If these things are
" so,

“ so, to what a degree of sinful negligence is even the Christian world arrived!—With regard to the world called Christian, this is too true. And no measure of sorrow can be sufficient to bewail the deplorable degeneracy. Negligence, or rather obstinacy, in this capital instance, is a melancholy indication of no less disobedience in other respects.

OBJECT. VI. “ This will be irksome, “ will render our religion a burden.” I hope, no one that pretends to seriousness will offer to make this objection. The finners in Sion made it. For which reason they are branded, and by the divine Spirit himself, with infamy that will never be blotted out. “ O! “ what a meanness is it! when will “ the Sabbath,” and its irksome solemnities *be gone* *? This discovers a heart

‡ Mal. i. 13 and Amos viii. 5.

heart alienated from GOD; that has not tasted the good word of grace, and favours not of the things which be of Christ. Otherwise, such would be the language; "One day thus employed, is better than a thousand †." It is tedious and burthenfome to pass a single day in devout exercises; how then shall we pass, how shall we endure the ages of eternity? since we are assured, that those happy beings, who stand around the throne, clothed with white robes, serve their God day and night, for ever and ever, in his temple. In the regions of immortality they find a heaven; because, there they have a never-ceasing and eternal communion with God, because there they have an uninterrupted and everlasting Sabbath.

† Psal. lxxxiv. 18.

F I N I S.



